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J. Otto Pohl

# The Years of Great Silence

*The Deportation, Special Settlement, and Mobilization into the Labor Army of Ethnic Germans in the USSR, 1941–1955*

ibidem

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Jonathan Otto Pohl

# THE YEARS OF GREAT SILENCE

## The Deportation, Special Settlement, and Mobilization into the Labor Army of Ethnic Germans in the USSR, 1941–1955

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# Contents


1 Introduction ..... 7

2 Sources ..... 11

3 Literature Review and Historiography ..... 19

4 The Origins of German Settlements in the Russian Empire ..... 39

5 Ethnic Germans in the Early USSR ..... 55

6 The Deportation ..... 77

7 Arrival in Exile in Siberia and Kazakhstan ..... 121

8 Fishing in the Far North ..... 149

9 The Labor Army ..... 155

10 The Special Settlement Regime ..... 213

11 Repatriated Germans ..... 233

12 Local Germans ..... 241

13 Number of Excess Deaths 1941–1948 ..... 249

14 End of the Special Settlement Regime for Germans ..... 253

15 The Post-Stalin Era ..... 259

16 Conclusion ..... 273

Bibliography ..... 275

# 1 Introduction

The title of this book is an English translation of the German phrase *die Jahre des grossen Schweigens*. The time period of the deportation, special settlement restrictions, and mobilization into the labor army is referred to as The Years of Great Silence because of the severe restrictions that existed on speaking or writing about the subject for most of the Soviet era. Except for a few activists like Dominik Hollmann and others these restrictions prevented the ethnic German population in the USSR from researching, writing about, or even speaking openly about their experience during the 14 years between 1941 and 1955. The end of this silence only came in the late 1980s during the era of Glasnost and Perestroika under Gorbachev.

Among the many peoples deliberately victimized in toto by totalitarian regimes during World War II were the ethnic Germans in the USSR. Dating back to 1763 the German settlements of the Volga, Black Sea, Caucasus, and other regions of the western part of the Russian Empire were one of the many groups of Germans ethnically cleansed by the Allied forces in the 1940s. German minorities in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia, and Latvia were largely erased as well as much of the German community of Hungary. These minorities totaled over four million people. The eastern territories of Germany itself including East Prussia, Silesia, and Pomerania were also ethnically cleansed of their former German inhabitants. The German inhabitants of areas of eastern Germany annexed to Poland and the USSR numbered another eight million plus people.[1] This large scale violent eviction of

1 The best short summary of this history covering all of these regions is the anthology by Steffen Prauser and Arfon Rees, ed. *The Expulsion of the 'German' Communities from Eastern Europe at the End of the Second World War.* Florence, Italy: European University Institute, 2004. Most works limit themselves to just eastern Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and sometimes Hungary. The 1940 evacuations from Estonia and Latvia as well as the flight and emigration out of Yugoslavia in the 1940s and 1950s are generally not covered. Prauser and Rees also include a piece on Germans in Romania.

millions of ethnic German civilians from their homelands is largely unknown in the English speaking world.[2] The uprooting and dispersal of over one million ethnic Germans from the western USSR to Siberia and Kazakhstan is even less well known than the larger expulsions of Germans from what is now Poland and the Czech Republic.[3] Close to a quarter of a million of the Russian Germans died prematurely as a direct result of the brutal treatment they received from the Soviet government during 1941 to 1948.[4]

The Second World War represented the nadir of the historical existence of the Russian Germans. The 1941 deportations, imposition of special settlement restrictions, and mobilization into the labor army took an enormous toll on the population. After 177 years of existence the German settlements in the Volga came to a violent end at the beginning of World War II. The Stalin regime forcibly dispersed the numerous German populations in the European areas of the USSR across the vastness of Siberia and Kazakhstan. The Soviet government thus permanently erased most of the former German colonies established in the Russian Empire.

This book deals primarily with the experience of the ethnic Germans in the USSR from 1941 to 1955. It emphasizes the 1941 internal deportations from the Volga region and other areas of the Soviet Union west of the Urals to Siberia and Kazakhstan. The main focus is on the uprooting of the German communities in European areas of the USSR, their material and legal conditions as

2 The first English language book to deal with the subject of the mass expulsion of Germans from eastern Germany and Central Europe was Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, *Nemesis at Potsdam: The Anglo-Americans and the Expulsion of the Germans: Background, Execution, Consequences.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.

3 This number includes not only the initial nearly 800,000 ethnic Germans deported from European areas of the USSR in fall of 1941 to Siberia and Kazakhstan but, also the more than 200,000 repatriated back to Soviet control in 1945–1946 that had initially avoided deportation due to the Nazi capture of large parts of Ukraine and western Russia. The chapters on the deportation and repatriation include thorough discussions of the numbers involved.

4 The statistical data on mortality during deportation, confinement as special settlers, and mobilization in the labor army is grossly incomplete. Estimates range from a low of 150,000 to a high of 400,000. My own estimate is near 245,000 and is dealt with in detail in its own chapter.

special settlers east of the Urals, their mobilization into the labor army, and their release from the special settlement restrictions in 1955. It starts with a short introduction of the history of the ethnic Germans in the Russian Empire beginning with the 22 July 1763 Manifesto by Empress Catherine II and ends with the group's mass emigration out of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. These other portions of the book are meant largely to introduce and put the experience of the 1940s and 1950s in context. They are thus shorter and less detailed. They are also much less heavily dependent upon primary source material, especially archives from GARF (State Archives of the Russian Federation) in Moscow. Thus the very rich history of ethnic Germans in the Russian Empire and the USSR before 1941 is dealt with rather cursorily in this book.

While the 20th century saw a number of horrible events befall the ethnic Germans in the Russian Empire and the USSR, none of them had the same long term negative effects as the events of the Second World War which led to the violent end of their numerous communities in the Volga, Ukraine, Caucasus, and other regions. Other traumatic events experienced by the ethnic Germans in the Russian Empire and USSR included the internal deportation of 200,000 Volhynian Germans and others near the western borders during World War One, the Civil War, the 1921–1922 famine, the uprooting of 60,000 German "kulaks" in 1930–1931, the 1932–1933 famine, and the shooting of 46,000 Germans during the Great Terror of 1937–1938. In terms of total losses of life these cumulative events claimed more people than the events of 1941–1955. The two famines may have claimed 200,000 Russian German lives each for a total of 400,000 premature deaths.[5] In contrast the annihila-

5 The statistical data on premature deaths due to famine and repression is as noted earlier incomplete as well as often highly speculative. A.A. German and A.N. Kurochin, *Nemtsy SSSR v trudovoi armii (1941–1945),* Moscow: Gotika, 1998, pp. 21–23 give figures of 150,000 German famine deaths for the Volga region alone for 1920–1922 and 200,000 for Germans in the whole of the USSR during 1932–1933. However, even the lowest estimates place the total at over 480,000 premature deaths from famine and repression of which 100,000 were the 1932–1933 famine and over 180,000 the 1918–1922 Civil War and famine.

tion of the German settlements in 1941 and subsequent repression at the hands of the Soviet regime during the next 14 years claimed about 245,000 lives. In total from 1918 to 1948, Soviet repression and famine led to around 700,000 premature deaths among the Russian Germans.

This book concentrates on the 14 years that the majority of ethnic German citizens in the Soviet Union spent living under special settlement restrictions for a number of reasons. The primary one is that it was the most traumatic period in their short history. It permanently destroyed most of their traditional communities that had existed since 1764. Their physical dispersal across the vast expanse of Siberia and Kazakhstan greatly altered their path of historical development. Already a diaspora their multiple displacement during the 1940s through internal deportation and then mobilization in the labor army led ultimately to most of their descendants leaving the territory of the USSR and immigrating to Germany. This had deep multi-generational psychological, cultural, and other effects on the group.

Symbolically the deportation and subsequent 14 years has become extremely important to the descendants of the survivors. The anniversary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Ukaz of 28 August 1941 has been an official day of mourning and commemoration in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1982. It is heavily represented in their art and literature. The recent collective narrative of the group has been one of seeking redemption from the victimization of these years.

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Viktor Krieger, *Bundesburger russlanddeutscher Herkunft: Historische Schlusselerfahrungen und kollektives Gedachtnis.* Munster: Lit Verlag, 2013, pp. 240–242.

# 2 Sources

This book is based in significant part upon archival sources from Moscow especially GARF (The State Archives of the Russian Federation) fonds 9479, 9414, and 9401. These archival fonds deal primarily with the 1941 deportation of the ethnic Germans in European areas of the USSR to Kazakhstan and Siberia, their arrival and living conditions in the areas of forced resettlement, and their mobilization and work in the labor army. Other Russian archival sources used are RGASPI (Russian State Archives of Socio-Political History) fonds 17 and 644. These latter sources deal with the mobilization of ethnic Germans in the USSR into the fishing industry in the Arctic regions of Siberia and into the labor army, mostly in labor camps in the Urals during 1942 and 1943. A smaller amount of archival material cited in this book comes from Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, and the US.

A huge amount of the archival material dealing with the ethnic Germans in the USSR between 1941 and 1955 consists of statistical data on the number of deportees, their distribution, their employment, and other similar data. This huge collection of statistical tables and other numerical and quantitative data has a number of problems even upon a cursory overview. For one thing despite constant recounts of the deportees there are a number of contradictions and gaps in the data. The NKVD kept very poor records on deaths in particular. There are no significant records on the number of deported Germans to die from 1941 to 1944. Only from 1945 on are there such statistics. There are some statistics on the mortality rates of mobilized Germans in corrective labor camps from 1942–1944. But, this data too is incomplete especially with regards to how many mobilized Germans discharged as invalids died shortly afterwards from ailments acquired working in the camps.

I also conducted a small number of interviews with elderly ethnic Germans in Kyrgyzstan in the towns of Kant and Ivanovka

in 2010. Kant is best known for hosting a small Russian military base.[6] The town itself is situated next to the formerly all German settlement of Luxemburg. A number of Germans still live in Kant. Among these residents are a number of elderly people who survived the horrors of the Second World War II. Now past their 80s these women and a few men represent an important and untapped source of oral history. In Kant on 14 November 2010 we interviewed four women and one man. Although hardly a representative sample of the Germans of Central Asia, they did provide us with some valuable insights into the life of the nationality during the Soviet era. A couple of weeks later we continued our collection of interviews with Germans in the small town of Ivanovka.

Ivanovka was founded by Mennonites from the Talas Valley in 1910. However, the small town about an hour east of Bishkek on the way to Tokmak has few German inhabitants today. Instead the town is inhabited mostly by Kyrgyz and has a large Dungan[7] population. On 5 December 2010, I went with two research assistants to the town of Ivanovka to conduct further interviews of Germans. Despite the town's Mennonite origins we saw very little evidence that this had once been a European rather than a Central Asian settlement. Today one has to actively search out the few Germans remaining in Ivanovka.

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6 Kyrgyzstan was the only country in the world to host military bases from both the US and the Russian Federation. The US had an airbase at Manas Airport on the edge of Bishkek. The primary official function of the base was to supply the US war effort in Afghanistan. There is speculation, however, that the base was also used to gather intelligence on the People's Republic of China next door to Kyrgyzstan.

7 Dungans are Muslim Chinese living in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In China where they originated from they are called Hui. The Dungans arrived in Russian Turkestan during the 19th Century as refugees fleeing from persecution under the Qing Dynasty. They came from Gansu and Shaanxi and speak a language related to Chinese, but now written in Cyrillic. They also now all speak Russian. Many can also speak Kazakh or Kyrgyz depending upon where they live. In 1999 there were officially 51,766 Dungans in Kygyzstan and 36,945 in Kazakhstan (Elizabeth Alles, "The Chinese Speaking Muslims (Dungans) of Central Asia: A Case of Multiple Identities in a Changing Context," *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 6, no. 2 (June 2005), p. 122). Like other minorities in Kyrgyzstan they have suffered from *de-facto* ethnic discrimination since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Alles, p. 132).

Due to a number of factors the amount of material I was able to gather from oral interviews was limited. One factor was a lack of resources. Another was my own lack of expertise in collecting life stories from interviewees. But, also important was the fact that the German community of Kyrgyzstan has largely disappeared. Most of the population resettled in Germany during the 1990s. What is left is not only small, but consists almost entirely of people in mixed German-Slavic families. It also contains a disproportionate number of people physically and mentally unable to be interviewed among its elderly population. The more able bodied and mentally sound survivors of Stalin's regime were far more likely to emigrate and settle in Germany. The emigration not only greatly reduced the total number of Germans in Kyrgyzstan it also destroyed the formerly compact areas of settlement. Now the population is greatly spread out and visiting previously all German settlements like Ivanovka resulted in the acquisition of only a couple of interviews. Of course my own inexperience with collecting oral history contributed to the difficulties in finding people to interview. I had only done it once before and it was much easier to find interview subjects among the much more compactly settled Karachai minority in Kyrgyzstan than among the very widely dispersed Germans. So while I made a good faith effort to interview elderly Germans and their family members who had survived the Stalin era and still lived in Kant and Ivanovka the results were far less impressive than I had initially hoped.

Unfortunately, the sample of remaining Germans in Kyrgyzstan does not lend itself well to oral history. First, there are few Germans in the country still alive who remember the Stalin era and many of them do not remember it well. Second, there are almost no pure German families left. The Germans remaining in Kyrgyzstan almost all have Russian or in a few cases Ukrainian spouses. This makes the sample much more Russified than the population has been historically. Indeed a number of them remain in Kyrgyzstan not by choice, but because the German government has deemed them insufficiently "German" to be allowed to settle as *Spaetaussielder* in Germany. There are also no more compact areas of settlement in Kyrgyzstan. The population has become

dispersed making the tracking down of elderly members quite difficult. It took over two months to organize two trips to find and interview eight Germans in Kant and Ivanovka. During this time two potential interviewees died before they could be interviewed. One labor army survivor that had not yet perished was in such poor physical and mental health that it was impossible to conduct a proper interview with him. All of these factors makes oral history more difficult among the Germans in Kyrgyzstan than for almost any other ethnic group, most of which still have compact areas of settlement.

In the 1990s the partial opening of Soviet archives revolutionized historical research on the former USSR. This is especially true regarding the study of Stalin's national deportations. Prior to 1989 the archival records regarding this chapter in Soviet history remained almost completely closed. In that year N.F. Bugai published the first article on the subject to be based on archival research, "K voprosu deportatsii narodov SSSR v 30–40 kh godakh," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 6, 1989. This article was only the first in a flood of Russian language scholarship on the subject to take advantage of the more liberalized access to Soviet era archives.

During the 1990s the Soviet archives provided a wealth of information to various scholars on various historical aspects of the deported peoples. The deportation decrees, legislation on the special settlement restrictions and resolutions removing the repressed peoples from these restrictions can now all be found in various published document collections. Also available in published form are many NKVD and MVD reports on the number and location of the special settlers, their use as a work force, their material conditions, their political outlook, and information on attempted escapes and arrests. Similar material is available on the mobilization of Germans into the labor army. But, just as important is what the Soviet archives apparently do not contain. The information contained in the current Soviet archives is far from complete. Huge lacunae exist regarding day to day life for the special settlers. Relying only upon the Soviet archives cannot answer many of the most interesting historical questions regarding the Germans in Kazakhstan, Siberia, and Central Asia.

The former Soviet archives were most open during the years 1991–1994. Since this brief time access has again been restricted. Even at their most open the vast majority of Soviet archives remained restricted. Many files regarding the Soviet period remain closed and getting access to those that are not is difficult, especially for people like myself lacking the proper connections. The only exceptions are the archives in the Baltic States. Access to these archives is open even to foreigners. In 2003 I was able to get access to the files surrounding the investigation and trial of Fast, Bergmann, Schulze, and Oldenburg in Soviet occupied Estonia in 1974. Outside the Baltic States, most Soviet archives regarding political trials in the 1970s remain closed to researchers.

All of the archives in Bishkek that were classified as secret or top secret during the Stalin era had again been reclassified as such when I visited the Central Archives of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2012. This was the case even for documents that had already been published and thus were readily available even within Kyrgyzstan. A truly absurd post-Soviet example of this policy was the fact that the archival reading room had these published document collections and would refer you to them even as they refused to show you the originals on the basis that they were classified as secret and top secret and thus a matter of state security. Mind you these were all documents from the 1940s for the Kyrgyz SSR, an integral component of the USSR, a state that ceased to exist in 1991. The idea that seeing the originals rather than verbatium reproductions of the same documents was any type of security issue for modern Kyrgyzstan is something that only Central Asian politicians could come up with. As a result, however, I could not access any NKVD or MVD connected archives in the Kyrgyz Republic. Strangely enough this was not a problem regarding central archives in Moscow like GARF and RGASPI. There many of the NKVD and MVD documents dealing with the repression of the ethnic Germans in the USSR in the 1940s were readily available.

Much of the Soviet archival material in GARF (State Archives of the Russian Federation) in Moscow from the NKVD and MVD regarding the deportation of the Germans in the USSR to Kazakhstan and Siberia and their subsequent mobilization into the labor

army and life under special settlement restrictions consists of statistical data. These statistical records which include numbers on location, occupation, and even to a very limited extent mortality are immediately suspect. The numbers frequently do not add up. Numerous mathematical errors in adding are apparent as is the fact that documents referring to the same groups of people frequently vary by as much as 15%. The numerous differing totals of the number of Germans subject to deportation, those actually deported, and those arriving in Siberia and Kazakhstan are perhaps the greatest example. Here there is no official accounting for most of the differences between those claimed to have been deported and those counted as having arrived in their new places of settlement. Thus one is left with a series of numbers that roughly look like nearly 900,000 subjected to resettlement in 1941, 850,000 actually deported, and 800,000 arriving alive in Siberia and Kazakhstan. The inconsistency of the various numerical counts is combined with a serious lacunae on statistical data related to mortality.

Russian historian Oleg Khlevniuk has noted a number of problems with using the Soviet archives regarding historical research on the GULag including the special settlement regime. The archives contain only a limited amount of material useful to social and cultural historians. In part this is because the authorities never collected and recorded this information. A further limitation is the fact that the NKVD destroyed a large number of documents on a regular basis including the complaints written by prisoners and special settlers. In addition to routine elimination of such documentation the Soviet authorities also destroyed a number of files for political reasons.[8] The archives existing today represent only a small portion of the material ever collected by the NKVD and MVD.

Missing from the published NKVD and MVD archival records regarding the various deported peoples including the Germans is

8 Oleg Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror,* trans. Vadim Staklo. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 3–6.

important information on the daily life of the special settlers that did not interest the security organs. V. Bruhl noted that the published archival collections are almost completely silent on such important issues as religious life, the relationship between the deportees and the surrounding local population, and the difficulties special settlers faced in being admitted to educational institutions.[9] Some of this information can be obtained from interviewing survivors of the special settlement regime. But, as noted elsewhere both the number of survivors and the quality of their memories have been rapidly declining in recent years. Ironically the best interview samples available to researchers may have been among the earlier *Aussiedler* to come to West Germany in the 1970s.

Oxana Klimkova has also noted the valuable contribution oral sources can make to the history of the special settlers including the Germans. Particularly she has noted the value of oral interviews in evaluating the changes in the attitudes of the exiles over the course of several generations.[10] Although the children and grandchildren of deportees undoubtedly can provide information on the generational changes these groups underwent, they cannot serve as primary sources for the experience of the special settlement regime itself. Only the actual survivors of the deportations and special settlement restrictions can serve as eyewitnesses to that history. Unfortunately, the number of such survivors is rapidly dwindling due to the forces of natural attrition. A fact Klimkova herself notes.[11] In the weeks it took to organize our interviews, two of the people we originally intended to interview died. In particular the number of men still able to bear witness to these events has shrunken dramatically in recent decades. In our own interviews we found the gender imbalance to be very heavily weighted in favor of women. Out of eight people we interviewed

9 V.I. Bruhl, "Deportirovannye narody v Sibiri (1935–1965 gg.). Sravintel'nye analiz," in I.L. Shcherbakova, *Nakazannyi narod: Repressi protiv rossiiskikh nemtsev*. Moscow: "Zven'ia", 1999, p. 97.

10 Oxana Klimkova, "Special Settlements in Soviet Russia in the 1930s–1950s," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter 2007), pp. 127–129.

11 Klimkova, pp. 138–139.

six were women and only two men, one of whom was in quite frail health. It is very unlikely that another western scholar will come around to interview these people before they die of old age.

Finally, almost all of the contemporary written documentation on the lives of the Germans and other special settlers during and after their deportation comes from official Soviet party and state sources. In particular, the NKVD and MVD recorded much of the information on the special settlers and labor army conscripts found in the Soviet archives. These sources of course contain a strong bias in only providing the official regime point of view. The available documentation "is almost entirely regime material, whether of the party, regional leaders or secret police, for the peoples concerned left, to all intents and purposes, no written source material whatever."[12] This is a problem that has plagued historical research in other fields as well, for instance research into the 18th century workers' movements in Europe. For the most part only two types of sources providing the viewpoint of the deported peoples themselves exist. These two types of sources are memoir pieces written long after the fact and oral interviews collected long after the fact. Most of the German memoirs relating to the deportations and subsequent repression during World War II could only be set down in writing starting in the 1990s. Berta Bachmann's memoir from 1983 is an early exception. Likewise conducting oral interviews only became possible in Central Asia near the very end of the Soviet era. By this time a large number of those who lived through the Stalin era had died. Others suffered from faulty memories. Even at this time many of those most likely to be able to recall and narrate the events of the 1940s had already settled in West Germany. A trend that greatly accelerated during the 1990s leaving only a handful of Germans in the region, many of them in mixed families, and often too infirm to interview. Soon interviews with deported Germans and other repressed peoples in the former Soviet Union will again become impossible as natural mortality reduces the surviving population to zero.

12 Yaacov Ro'i, "The Transformation of Historiography on the 'Punished Peoples'," *History and Memory*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2009), p. 152.

# 3 Literature Review and Historiography

The various published document collections, monographs, and other published materials used in this book come mostly from Russia and to a lesser extent other former Soviet republics such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The section below is a summary of the major sources I used in writing this book as well as some limited criticism of these works. It does not include all of the sources cited in this book nor have I cited all the sources consulted in the writing of this manuscript. The amount of literature on the subject in Russian has exploded in the last three decades and any attempt to even just list all of the sources would end up creating a very lengthy tome. The study of the Russian Germans has three basic geographical bases.[13] The first is Russia. The other two are Germany and North America. Much of the research in all three areas has been conducted by people descended of German speaking colonists to the Russian Empire. This is particularly true of earlier scholarship. Prior to the partial opening of the Soviet archives and the flood of German emigration out of the USSR, few people outside of the ethnicity showed much interest in studying the diaspora. Indeed the events of World War Two suppressed such external interests. In the USSR research on many aspects of modern Russian German history such as the deportations could not be openly conducted or published. The crimes of the Stalin regime and the fate of his victims remained an historical black hole in Soviet scholarship until the late 1980s. In West Germany the fate of the Russian Germans was overshadowed on the one hand by the Holocaust and on the other hand by the mass expulsion of

13 There have been a number of bibliographic guides on the study of the Russian Germans. One of the most recent and thorough bibliographies is by Eric J. Schmaltz. He notes this geographical and linguistic division as well as the paucity of research on the group outside Germany, the US, Canada and the former Soviet Union. For instance there is almost nothing written on the group by British scholars. Eric Schmaltz, *An Expanded Bibliography and Reference Guide for the Former Soviet Union's Ethnic Germans*. Fargo, ND: Germans from Russia Heritage Collections, NDSU Libraries, 2003.

Germans from eastern Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia into the truncated borders of the Federal Republic. In both cases the numbers involved are much larger than the entire Russian German population.[14] Of course in the German Democratic Republic research on the Russian Germans remained taboo for the same reasons it did in the USSR. In the US few people had any interest in exploring the fate of a small ethnic group stigmatized as fascists by its former Soviet ally during WWII and portrayed as an oppressed minority by Nazi propaganda. The fact that the Russian Germans actually were an oppressed minority in the USSR did little to change this general indifference to their plight. Only after the topic received significant attention in Russia did US and Canadian scholars without any ethnic connection to the group start to pay serious attention to the history of the Russian Germans.

Despite difficulties and a lack of general interest, however, North American scholars did produce a number of works on the Russian Germans in the years between World War II and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Much of this literature focused on the 18th and 19th centuries and traced the migration of colonists from various states in Central Europe to the Russian Empire and then to the Western Hemisphere. Earlier German research formed the basis of most of this scholarship.

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14 In terms of sheer numbers of people forcibly expelled from their homelands, the 1944–1945 removal of ethnic Germans from eastern Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia to the territory that subsequently formed the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic was the largest instance of ethnic cleansing in recorded history. Over 12 million ethnic Germans lost their ancestral homelands amid extreme violence and deprivation during this time (Steffen Prauser and Arfon Rees, p. 4). The number to have died as a result is estimated to be no less than 400,000 and perhaps as large as 2.2 million (Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004, p. 38). In terms of people deliberately murdered due to their ethnicity, the Nazi extermination of the Jews is numerically the largest genocide in Europe during and after World War II. The Holocaust claimed the lives of around 5.3 million Jews of which over 3 million perished in death camps from poison gas (Robert Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe*. London: Vintage Books, 2008, p. 587). In contrast the total Russian German population in the USSR during World War II did not exceed 1.5 million people.

Due to the existence of three regions of research, the scholarship on Russian Germans has three important languages. These languages are Russian, German, and English. The Russian language scholarship remained limited until the early 1990s. Afterwards interest in the deportations, labor army, and other aspects of Russian German history spurred a flood of Russian language publications including document collections not only in the Russian Federation, but also in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Important research on Russian Germans that had been suppressed during the Soviet era emerged throughout the former USSR. Out of the three centers of research on Russian Germans, Russia was the most important one during the crucial decade of the 1990s when some of the former Soviet archives became available to selected historians.

The study of the Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia came under severe restrictions in the Soviet Union after 1941. The Soviet government liberalized these restrictions somewhat in the years after Stalin's death. But it was only in 1989 that scholars in the USSR could publish research pertaining to the mass deportation of the Germans and other peoples sent to special settlements. Since this time there has been considerable scholarship on the Russian Germans by scholars using new archival data and other sources in Russia, Kazakhstan, and other places.

During the 1990s Russian scholars compiled and published a number of useful document collections on Stalin's national deportations including the Germans. Foremost among these scholars has been N.F. Bugai. He has compiled a number of important document collections on the deportations of various nationalities by the Stalin regime. His *Iosif Stalin – Lavrentiiu Berii. "Ikh nado deportirovat',"* *Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii* (Moscow: Druzhba narodov, 1992) provided the basic documentation on the deportation and material conditions in special settlements for all the major nationalities subjected to this particular form of repression. Most of his other works deal with particular nationalities or geographical areas. The most important document collection edited by Bugai for the study of the Russian Germans is *"Mobilizovat' nemtsev v robochie kolonny … I. Stalin": Sbornik dokumentov (1940-e*

*gody).* Moscow: Gotika, 1998. This collection contains a number of important documents on the deportation of the Germans and their subsequent mobilization into the labor army. Most of the collection is devoted to NKVD documents on the conscription, work, and conditions of Germans in the labor army. One of the sections of the book deals specifically with Kazakhstan and Central Asia. This work provides valuable primary source material on the history, organization, structure, demography and legal status of the labor army.

Although Bugai's most important contribution to the study of deported peoples in the USSR in general and the Germans in particular has been in his compilation of numerous document collections, he has also written some useful monographs and journal articles on the subject. The most salient of these works regarding the Russian Germans are *L. Beria – I. Stalinu: "Soglasno vashemu ukazaniiu …"* Moscow, "AIRO XX," 1995. which has a solid chapter on the deportation, special settlement, and mobilization into the labor army of the Germans and "40-e gody: "Avtonomiiu nemtsev povolzhia likidirovat'," *Istoriia SSSR,* no. 2, 1991. These two works provide concise summaries of the history of the Germans in the USSR from 1941 to 1955 based upon extensive archival research.

Bugai is not the only Russian scholar to put together important collections of documents dealing with the history of the Russian Germans. Other compilers of important document collections include O.L. Milova, Auman and Chebatoraeva, V.A. Berdinskikh, Karpykova, A. Eisfeld, and V. Herdt, and T.V. Tsaraevskaia-Diakina.

The Milova collection, *Deportatsii narodov SSSR (1930–1950-e gody), Chast' 2. Deportatsiia nemtsev (Sentiabr' 1941–Fevral' 1942 gg.)* Moscow RAN, 1995. deals with the mass deportation of Germans from western parts of the USSR during the fall of 1941 and the initial horrible material conditions they suffered in Kazakhstan and Siberia. It is comprised primarily of NKVD decrees and reports regarding the deportations and the subsequent fate of the German special settlers. These official NKVD documents paint a picture of Soviet disorganization and chaos leading to massive

human suffering due to severe material deprivation. Report after report notes the failure to provide the deportees with adequate housing, food and medical care. Despite the accumulation of a large number of shocking reports, little seems to have been done by the Soviet government to significantly ameliorate the deadly poverty suffered by the German deportees.

Auman and Chebatoraeva have compiled many of the most important documents issued by the governments of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union regarding the Russian Germans in *Istoriia rossiiskikh nemstev v dokumentakh, vol. I, (1763–1992 gg.)* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi institut gumanitarnykh programm, 1993. Starting with Catherine the Great and extending through to Boris Yeltsin this collection contains much of the basic documentation governing the relationship between the Russian and Soviet states and the Russian Germans. This collection provides a good basic selection of central government documents.

Chebatoreva on her own has also compiled extensive documents on the Volga German Workers' Commune and Volga German ASSR in the two volume *Nemtsy soiuza SSR: Drama Velikikh potriasenie, 1922–1939 gg. Arkhivye, dokumenty, kommentary*, vol. 1, Moscow: Public Academy of Sciences of Russian Germans and ANO "Center of German Culture", 2009. The first volume in particular contains a number of useful documents regarding the autonomous state structures of the Volga Germans from 1918 to 1941. It focuses on the political and economic development of this territory during these 23 years. It was during this time that the ethnic Germans came closest to developing into a distinct nation complete with its own state within the Soviet Union.

A.A. German *Istoriia respubliki nemtsev povolzha: V sobytiiakh, faktakh, dokumentakh,* Moscow: Gotika, 2000 is divided into three main parts. The middle 100 pages are documents dealing with the Volga German Worker's Commune and Volga German ASSR. The first main part is slightly longer and is an extended timeline of the Volga Germans from their initial settlement in response to the manifestos of 1762 and 1763 all the way up to the early 1990s. The final main part is a collection of statistical data on the Volga German ASSR mostly from the year 1939, two years before its aboli-

tion. The timeline provides a good narrative background from which to put the later reproduced documents into proper context.

V.A. Berdinskikh's *Spetsposelentsy: Politcheskaia ssylka narodov Sovetskoi Rossii*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2005 is a massive book on special settlers and has a very extensive section on Russian Germans. It covers both the special settlement regime and the labor army. Unlike many collections, Berdinskikh does not limit himself to documents culled from the central archives in Moscow. He reproduces with commentary a large number of documents from regional and local archives from Kirov Oblast including the personal files of individual special settlers and labor army conscripts. These files provide new insights into how the NKVD mechanisms of repression and control worked on the individual level.

G.A. Karpykova's collection, *Iz istorii nemtsev Kazakhstana (1921–1975), Sbornik dokumentov iz arkhiva presidenta respubliki Kazakhstan*. Almaty-Moscow: Gotika, 1997 is the one of the few document collections to focus specifically on Germans in Central Asia. This book deals with the history of the Germans in Kazakhstan during most of the Soviet period. It contains documents dealing with the modern history of the Germans in Kazakhstan taken mostly from party archives. The book has three sections. The first one deals with Germans in Kazakhstan from 1921 until 1941, the second from 1941 to 1955, and the final one from 1956 to 1975. Among other things the book covers *korenizatsiia* (indigenization), the deportations and special settlements, and the partial rehabilitation of the Germans in Kazakhstan after the death of Stalin. This last theme includes the limited restoration of German language education and media in Kazakhstan. The collection provides a great deal of archival information, particularly documents from the Communist Party in Kazakhstan, not published elsewhere. Its regional emphasis makes it especially useful for scholars researching the history of Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

N.L. Pobol and P.M. Polian's rather large document collection on forced resettlement in the USSR during the Stalin era, *Staliniskie deportatsii 1928–1953, Dokumenty*. Moscow: Materik, 2005

includes reproductions of the numerous deportation orders and instructions for the Russian Germans as well as the other deported peoples. It is quite thorough and includes not only all of the central government decrees issued from Moscow ordering the deportation of Germans from western regions of the USSR to Kazakhstan and Siberia but, also deportations from cities and border regions in Central Asia and Siberia. It also includes documentation on the secondary deportations of Germans to the fishing industry in the Far North and mobilization into the labor army.

T.V. Tsarevskaia-Diankina's document collection, *Spetsposelentsy v SSSR:* vol. V of *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: Konets 1920-kh – pervaia polvina 1950-kh godov.* Moscow: Rosspen, 2004 provides a large number of documents dealing with the legal structure of the special settlement regime under which most Russian Germans lived during the 1940s and early 50s. The constant upgrading of the security of the special settlement system in order to control the movement of the deportees and prevent them from mobilizing politically is apparent in this collection. The special settlement system operated as a form of punitive internal exile. It also provided a large amount of captive labor to use in remote areas of the USSR such as Kazakhstan and Siberia. The NKVD control and surveillance over the special settlers is the main focus of many of the official archival documents dealing with the Russian Germans reproduced in this collection.

One particularly eclectic work in Russian containing memoir pieces, Soviet government documents, poems, drawings, and other works is Svetlana Alieva's three volume collection on the various deported peoples, *Tak eto bylo: Natsional'nye repressi v SSSR, 1919–1953.* Moscow: Insan, 1993. Alieva herself is the daughter of a Karachai father and a Russian mother. She spent her childhood in Central Asia as a special settler. The collection contains chapters on all of the major deported peoples in the USSR including the Russian Germans as well as the Karachais, Kalmyks, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and others. The section on Germans includes a fair bit of information on Kyrgyzstan. While the Alieva collection contains some important official Soviet documents its great value is its presentation of sources written by survivors of the Stalin era

repression rather than its perpetrators. The 1990s in addition to seeing a partial declassification of the Soviet archives including some of the NKVD documents dealing with the deported peoples also saw a number of survivors finally write down their memoirs. This was a crucial time in the creation of useable source material. As discussed above the thirty years that have elapsed since this time have made the collection of material based upon the memories of survivors much more difficult than it was in the early 1990s.

Document collections on Russian Germans translated into languages other than Russian are still quite rare. The Alfred Eisfeld and Viktor Herdt volume, *Deportation, Sondersiedlung, Arbeitsarmee: Deutsche in der Sowjetunion 1941 bis 1956.* Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1996 represents one of the few such collections. It contains a large number of Soviet decrees, NKVD reports, and other documents related to the deportation, exile in special settlements, and mobilization of Germans into the labor army translated into German. Many of these documents have been published elsewhere in Russian, but some are new to the volume. This collection is quite large and focuses exclusively on the history of the Russian Germans from 1941 to 1955.

Besides document collections a number of important Russian language monographs on the history of the Russian Germans have been published since the 1990s. A.A. German and I.R. Pleve, *Nemtsy povolzh'ia: Kratkii istoricheskie ocherk.* Saratov: Saratov University, 2002 is a very short monograph that covers the history of the Volga Germans from 1763 to present day. The collaboration between German who is an historian mostly of the 20th century and Pleve who is an historian of the 18th and 19th centuries works very well. It provides short and useful even if sparsely detailed due to brevity descriptions of most of the major events of the Germans in the Volga region. Its main drawback is its geographical limitations. It does not cover any of the German colonies established in the Black Sea region or elsewhere in the Russian Empire.

Another very useful monograph is A.A. German and A.N. Kurochkin's *Nemtsy SSSR v trudovoi armii (1941–1955).* Moscow:

Gotika, 1998 a short, but very detailed study of the history of the Russian Germans conscripted into the labor army during World War II. It covers the structural history of the labor army, the economic role of the institution in the USSR, the geographic distribution of its workers, and their wretched material conditions. It still to this day remains the best history of the Germans in the USSR conscripted into the labor army from 1941–1948.

Longer and less useful is L.P. Belkovet's monograph on German special settlers which focuses on the legal and material conditions of those deported or otherwise subjected to special settlement restrictions. Laboring under the burdensome title, *Administrativno-Pravoe polozhenie rossisskikh nemtsev na spetsposelenii, 1941–1955 gg.: Istoriko-pravoe issledovanie*. Moscow: Rosspen, 2003 it focuses particularly on the legal status of the German special settlers within the administrative laws of the USSR under Stalin. Because the Soviet Union under Stalin was a state of arbitrary administrative decrees by himself without any other legal principles this framework is not that useful.

Another example of Russian language scholarship is the excellent collection of articles edited by I.L. Shcherbakova, *Nakazannyi narod: Repressi protiv nemtsev.* Moscow: "Zvei'ia," 1999. This collection has important articles on the 1937–1938 "German Operation" by Okohtin and Roginsky, the special settlement regime by V.I. Bruhl, and L.P. Belkovets, and the labor army by G. Malamud. These articles provide a great deal of information on the legal and political mechanisms of Stalinist repression against the Russian Germans.

Finally, the textbook *Istoriia nemtsev rossii.* Moscow: MSNK-Press, 2005 written by A.A. German, T.S. Iliarionva, and I.R. Pleve provides an excellent general overview of the history of the Russian Germans. This publication has three volumes. The first one is a solid historical narrative of the group. The second one is a wide ranging collection of primary sources including some archival documents not published elsewhere. The final volume consists of methodological material on how to use the text and documents in a university classroom.

Many of the scholars that have produced important work on the Russian Germans in recent decades are members of the group themselves. Russian German scholars born in the USSR that have contributed to the recent historiography include A.A. German, A. Eisfeld, V. Herdt, V. Krieger, A. Shtraus, G. Krongardt, V.I. Bruhl and others. Germans from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are well represented among these scholars. German, Krieger, Shtraus, and Krongardt all have Central Asian origins. Krongardt and the late Shtraus both hail from Kyrgyzstan.

The material available specifically on the history of the Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia is limited in comparison to other regions of the Russian Empire and USSR. Only a few works have been published on these communities and most of these works are fairly recent. Traditionally research on the Russian Germans has concentrated on the communities in the Volga and Black Sea region. This is particularly true of the German and English language scholarship. Most of the existing scholarship on Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia has been published in Russian in the last thirty years.

Viktor Krieger's *Rein, Volga, Irtysh: Iz istorii nemtsev Tsentral'noi Azii.* Almaty: Daik-Press, 2006 is an admirable attempt to expand the available historical writing on the Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Unfortunately, the work is a collection of various separate pieces by the author rather than a coherent narrative of the group in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. As a result the work has significant gaps. For instance the work has no specific sections dealing with Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia during the 1930s. Nevertheless, this book has a lot of very good information from various Soviet archives including Jambul in Kazakhstan that has not been published before. Krieger presents detailed chapters on the Tsarist period, the early 1920s, and the deportations and forced labor of the 1940s. Also unlike many English language writers who show a moral ambiguity about Soviet crimes that would never be tolerated regarding Nazi atrocities, Krieger writes with moral clarity. This work is thus an important, but incomplete history of Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Gennadii Krongardt is one of the very few authors to write specifically about the history of Germans in Kyrgyzstan. His work, *Nemtsy v Kygystane 1880–1990 gg.* Bishkek: Ilim, 1997 concentrates on the German villages in the Talas Valley. Founded in 1882 these colonies formed the first permanent German settlements in Central Asia. He provides a concise history of the Germans in what is now Kyrgyzstan. Among the themes he deals with are their demographic growth, their economic activities, their political relations with the Tsarist and then Soviet governments, and the role of religion in their life.

The research on Russian Germans out of Germany has gone through several waves. The most recent wave came about as a reaction to the mass migration of Russian Germans to Germany during the 1990s. While the research of Russian scholars has been archive orientated that of German scholars has relied much more upon other sources including the life stories of the Russian Germans themselves. The resettlement in Germany of most of the German population from the Soviet Union greatly facilitated this work.

A number of memoir pieces dealing with the experiences of deportation and exile in Kazakhstan have been published in German. Some of these works have subsequently been translated into English. One of the first and longest of these memoirs is Berta Bachmann's *Memories of Kazakhstan* from 1983. This autobiographical work stands alone in a single volume in both the German and English language versions. Many other similar works, however, are shorter and have been published as parts of larger collections. These collections include Nelly Daes's, *Gone without a Trace* from 2001 and John B. Toews's *Journeys* from 1998.

Much German language scholarship deals with the integration of Russian Germans in Germany. Since little of this work is directly relevant to the history of the Germans in Kazakhstan and Siberia from 1941 to 1955 my remarks will be brief. It should be noted, however, that the largest group of Russian Germans to settle in Germany have come from Kazakhstan and not Russia proper.

One of the most prolific and accessible writers on the ethnic Germans in the Russian Empire and USSR in the German language has been Viktor Krieger since he moved from Kazakhstan to Germany. Much of his work in German has been aimed at a general audience rather than an academic one. His book, *Bundesbuerger russlanddeutscher Herkunft: Historische Schlusselerfahrungen und kollektives Gedaechtnis*. Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2013 is a good example. This work provides a good coverage of the deportations and particularly the mobilizations into the labor army. His use of letters from mobilized Germans in labor camps in the Urals as a primary source is something that is lacking in other accounts of the labor army. He also provides a significant amount of information on the comparatively neglected Germans from Georgia deported to Kazakhstan rather than just concentrating on the larger Volga and Black Sea groups. An even more accessible work by Krieger is the very short, but excellent booklet, *Deutsche aus Russland gestern und heute: Volk auf dem Weg*. Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, 2006 he co-authored with Hans Kampen and Nina Paulsen. This short illustrated work provides a basic overview of the history of the group from 1763 to today including the Stalin era.

Another ethnic German writer and historian to move from the former USSR to Germany and write a number of works in the German language is Alfred Eisfeld. His short work on the history of the Years of Great Silence, *Die Aussiedlung der Deutschen aus der Wolgarepublik (1941–1957)*. Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, 2008 based in part upon oral interviews with survivors in Germany sticks out as one of the few serious historical works on the subject to make extensive use of this source base. His work like that of Pleve and German, however, focuses heavily on the Volga Germans to the exclusion of other groups of ethnic Germans in the Russian Empire and USSR.

Works by Germans born in Germany on the Russian Germans are rarer and usually tackle subjects other than the Years of Great Silence. But, some of them are worthwhile sources particularly on the issue of migration out of the former USSR into Germany. One such book is Kerstin Armborst's *Ablosung von der Sow-*

*jetunion: Die Emigrationsbewegung der Juden und Deutschen vor 1987.* Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2001 which as the title denotes is a comparative study of the German and Jewish emigration movements in the USSR. While the main focus of this book is the 1970s activism to achieve permission to emigrate, the fundamental push factor of German emigration from the USSR was the repression of the years 1941 to 1955 and their continued aftermath and resulting discrimination.

Until recently most scholarship in North America on the Russian Germans concentrated on the immigration of large numbers of this ethnic group to the western hemisphere during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[15] Lack of access to sources in Russia and other areas of the former Soviet Union hampered historical research on the much larger population that had remained in the Russian Empire and USSR. Serious research into the history of the Germans under Soviet rule by American historians could only move significantly forward after historians in the former USSR freed the topic from its previous restraints.

A few English language works published in the late 1980s on the Russian Germans, however, stand out. Although most of these histories deal with either the group in general or on the large areas of settlement in the Volga and Black Sea there is one book that deals extensively with the Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Taking advantage of the first waves of Russian German *Aussiedler* to arrive in West Germany during the 1970s, Rasma Karklin's *Ethnicity in the USSR: The Perspective from Below*. Boston: MA: Allen & Unwin, 1986 while not specifically about the ethnic group contains a lot of important information on the group. Karklins interviewed 200 Russian German *Aussiedler* who settled in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1979. Most of these new

15 There is also a substantial body of Spanish language scholarship on Russian German immigration to Latin America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In particular a large number immigrated to Argentina with smaller communities established in Mexico and Paraguay. A large number also settled in Brazil, but the Portuguese language literature is much sparser than what is available in Spanish.

arrivals came from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. They provided information on the ethnic relations between Germans and other groups in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. It is apparent from these interviews that ethnic discrimination by the titular nationalities of these republics against national minorities was already well established by the end of the 1970s.

Another important English language work on the Russian Germans from this time is Ingeborg Fleischhauer and Benjamin Pinkus, *Soviet Germans: Past and Present.* London: C. Hurst, 1986. This small volume relies heavily on published Soviet material in the period before perestroika. Nevertheless, it manages to critically synthesize this information and provide a great deal of information on the nationality during the Soviet era. The book suffers from some problems stemming from having more than one author. Most notably, the chapters are uneven. The part by Pinkus is far superior to that written by Fleischhauer. Even today after the partial opening of Soviet archives the part of the book written by Pinkus still has a lot of utility. The part written by Fleischhauer, however, has largely been made obsolete by more thorough and accurate information published in the last three decades.

Irina Mukhina's book, *The Germans of the Soviet Union.* London: Routledge, 2007 is a short summary of the history of the Russian Germans and concentrates on the period of time after 1941. There is almost nothing on the life of the Russian Germans during the 1920s and the brief section on the 1930s deals only with the repression of dekulakization, the anti-religious campaigns, and the Great Terror of 1937–1938. The book does not contain any new conclusions but, it does provide a nice synopsis in English. It also has some interesting insights into the role gender played in the experience of the German exiles. She presented new details on the way in which women experienced the deportation and forced labor differently from men. The section on the legal and administrative organization of the special settlement regime is well organized and informative. Whereas some of the Russian language scholarship providing the exact same information has been less well organized and presented.

Unfortunately, the book also contains a great number of flaws. Supposedly much the new information regarding gender is based upon interviews with survivors. However, she almost never footnotes or lists by any type of identifying feature such as location, date or name a single person she allegedly interviewed. In the few instances where there is an endnote it includes only a name. Such instances occur exactly three times in the endnotes. Two of these are to individuals with Slavic surnames, one of which is male. Only one is to an identifiably female German name. Instead she just refers to the interviews in the text anonymously and worse collectively without any identifying or distinguishing information what so ever. Such instances occur six times in the endnotes and sixteen times in the text. We do not know where or when these interviews took place. Nor do we know the age, geographical origin, or anything else about these "interviewees" as she refers to them in the text. The homogenization of almost all the interviews into single sources without a proper citation is extremely problematic. Indeed we do not even know the exact number of people she interviewed for this book and where the interviews took place.

The book also suffers from some serious factual errors and misleading information.

For instance the book claims that German men and women were separated as a matter of Soviet policy at the time of deportation in 1941. She wrote,

> While the massive disproportion of women to men among ethnic Germans could be explained by a number of other reasons which will be discussed later, official orders for family separations was one of the main factors which led to the phenomenon of "female echelons" going to Siberia and Central Asia.[16]

She provided no cited source for this allegation. While a number of families were inadvertently separated due to the chaos of the deportations there were no official orders to separate German male and female deportees to Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1941.

16 Irina Mukhina, *Germans of the Soviet Union*. London: Routledge, 2007, p. 45.

Instead she cited a document produced by the Nazi occupation authorities in Latvia referring to deportations from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania that is generally considered to be a falsification.[17] Pobol and Polian in their work *Staliniskie deportastii* specifically deal with this falsified document and provide a number of reasons over the course of two pages as to why it is highly likely that this document which so far only comes from Nazi German sources and not Soviet ones is a fake. Only an opening of the FSB archives can, however, verify 100 percent that the document is falsified.[18] The reasons for more women on the deportation trains than men included but, was not limited to the following factors. The NKVD had shot around 55,000 Russian German men in 1936–1938 and sent another 20,000 to GULag camps.[19] Another 33,516 German men were serving in the Red Army at this time and most of them were sent to construction battalions and then the labor army in 1942.[20] Finally, the NKO mobilized into construction battalions a large number of ethnic German men in Ukraine prior to the deportations and turned them over to the NKVD to work in labor camps. By the end of September 1941 a total of 18,600 Germans from Ukraine in 13 construction battalions worked in the Ivdel, Solikamsk, Bogoslov and Kimpersai labor camps.[21] The NKVD in fact noted these factors for the gender imbalance of arriving deportation echelons into Kazakhstan. One region in particular with very few men was Ayaguz Raion in Sempalatinsk Oblast and higher arrests

17 Mukhina, pp. 44–45.

18 N. Pobol and P. Polian, (eds.), *Staliniskie deportatsii 1928–1953, Dokumenty,* Moscow: Materik, 2005, pp. 779–780.

19 Viktor Krieger, "Chronologie der antideutschen Massnahmen in Russland bzw. der UdSSR," *Volk auf dem Weg* 8–9, 2007, p. 13.

20 Krieger, Victor, "Patriots or traitors?—The Soviet government and the 'German Russians' after the attack on the USSR by national socialist Germany," in: Karl Schlogel, ed., Russian-German Special Relations in the Twentieth Century: A Closed Chapter? New York: Berg Publishers, 2006, p. 150 and A.A. German and A.N. Kurochin, *Nemtsy SSSR v trudovoi armii (1941–1945).* Moscow: Gotika, 1998, p. 27.

21 State Archives of the Russian Federation hereafter GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, ll 2–3 and German and Kurochkin, pp. 48–49.

and mobilizations of men were the reasons given for this difference.[22] These factors alone would account for over 120,000 adult German men. Deliberate separation of German families other than arrests and mobilizations targeting men and not women only occurred after 1942 with the conscription of men and later women into sex segregated labor army contingents. Unfortunately, this is not the only error of this type in the book.

She also claimed Bogoslov was an area of special settlement rather than an NKVD labor camp that employed Russian Germans conscripted into the labor army. To make matters worse she claimed the total number of inmates and deaths for five camps for Bogoslov alone. The original document reads, "According to incomplete data, in the course of January–July 1942 in only five camps the total listed constituted on 1 August 43,856 mobilized Germans of which died 5,181."[23] Mukhina writes "In the first half of 1942, 5,181 out of 43,856 settlers in Bogoslovsk raion died, reaching a death rate of 11.1% in six months."[24] It is clear from the original document that these figures do not refer just to Bogoslov which was a labor camp devoted to industrial construction not a raion, but to four other camps as well. Further, it refers to "mobilized Germans" not "settlers." The two groups were separate legal categories at the time. Mobilized Germans were removed from the special settler count and placed under GULag authority. She continued to confuse the mortality rate of mobilized Germans in labor camps with deaths in special settlements throughout the paragraph. Since deaths in the labor army were much higher than in the special settlement areas this confusion of categories distorts the distribution of mortality between the two populations.

Finally, she has a considerable amount of material on special settlers in Kyrgyzstan in 1944. What she does not make explicit is that almost none of these special settlers are Germans. No Germans were deported to Kyrgyzstan in 1941–1942. The only resettlement to Kyrgyzstan during 1941 were 43,871 non-German

22 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 277 ob.
23 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, ll. 149–150.
24 Mukhina, p. 54.

evacuees.[25] Indeed the Soviet government initially considered deporting the 11,741 Germans living in Kyrgyzstan in 1941 out of the republic.[26] In 1942, ethnic Germans were thus less than one percent of the 1,615,800 people living in the Kyrgyz SSR.[27] By 1 July 1945 the total population of Kyrgyzstan had shrunk to 1,449,400 people.[28] The German special settlers in Kyrgyzstan consisted primarily of local Germans placed under special settlement restrictions only after 18 September 1945.[29] In 1944 the special settlers in Kyrgyzstan were almost all Chechens, Ingush, Karachais, Balkars and Meskhetian Turks deported between November 1943 and November 1944. The geographical and national distribution of the special settlers was thoroughly accounted for by the Soviet government on 1 January 1949. The Kyrgyz SSR had 128,747 special settlers of which only 14,954 were Germans versus 62,583 Chechens and Ingush, 23,974 Karachais, and 14,361 Balkars.[30] A more detailed breakdown is given on the various categories of German special settlers in each territory. For Kyrgyzstan only 528 Germans were classified as deported and thus would have been special settlers before 1945. The vast majority of them, 14,845 out of 15,752 people were "local" Germans who only became special settlers in 1945 and 1946.[31] Nowhere, however, does Mukhina note the national composition of the nearly 130,000 special settlers in Kyrgyzstan and she leaves the reader to think that the information does in fact refer primarily to Germans.

The amount of English language scholarship specifically on the history of the Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia published

25 Central State Archives of the Kyrgyz Republic hereafter TsGAKR, F. 105, O. 26, D. 37, l. 5.

26 N.F. Bugai, (ed.), *"Mobilizovat' nemtsev v robochie kolonny … I. Stalin": Sbornik dokumentov (1940-e gody)*. Moscow: Gotika, 1998, doc. 5, pp. 23–26.

27 TsGAKR, F. 105, O. 26, D. 37, l. 51.

28 TsGAKR, F. 105, O. 26, D. 37, l. 38.

29 V.A. Berdinskikh, *Spetsposelentsy: Politcheskaia ssylka narodov Sovetskoi Rossii*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2005, doc. 9, p. 342.

30 V.N. Zemskov, *Spetsposelentsy v SSSR, 1930–1960*. Moscow: Nauka, 2005, p. 164.

31 Zemskov 2005, p. 214.

since the opening of the Soviet archives is quite small. Concentrating mostly on Kazakhstan it amounts to a few journal articles and book chapters. Most of these pieces are short and a number only cover the history of the group prior to 1991 in a cursory manner.

# 4 The Origins of German Settlements in the Russian Empire

The German population of the Russian Empire consisted of four basic groups. Only one of these groups can be properly called Russian Germans and are the focus of this study. The four groups of Germans living in Tsarist Russia consisted of the Baltic Germans, urban Germans, Germans living in Congress Poland, and German colonists in the Volga, Black Sea and other regions.[32] This last group constituted the Russian Germans as the term is used in this work. The descendants of agricultural colonists to the Russian Empire during the 18th and 19th centuries, these settlers remained quite diverse until the second half of the 20th Century. The only features they shared in common were a legal classification by both the Tsarist and Soviet governments as Germans by *natsional'nost'* due to speaking a Germanic language, descent from voluntary immigrants to the Russian Empire from Central Europe, and adherence to a form of Christianity other than Orthodoxy. They remained a collection of distinct communities differentiated by geography, dialect, and confession until 1941. After this time they began to coalesce into a single people. It is only as a result of their common experiences of deportation, special settlement, and mobilization in the labor army that Volga Germans, Black Sea Germans, Germans from the Caucasus and other subgroups began to lose their separate identities and merge into a larger Russian German nationality.[33] In the years after World War II, a common experience of severe persecution at the hands of the Soviet regime

32 Fleischhauer has a slightly different division between Baltic Germans, urban Germans, and colonists. She does not distinguish German settlers in Congress Poland from those in the Russian Empire proper (Ingeborg Fleischhauer and Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Germans: Past and Present.* London: C. Hurst and Company, 1986, p. 13.

33 A.A. German, *Bol'shevistskaia vlast'i Nemtskaia avtonomiia v Volge (1918–1941).* Saratov: Saratov University Press, 2004, pp. 7–8.

did much to weld the survivors of these communities into a common ethnicity.

The other groups of Germans in the Russian Empire differed substantially from the German colonists in a number of ways. In particular the Baltic Germans stood apart as being distinct from the Russian Germans that settled along the Volga, the Black Sea, and other areas of the Russian Empire outside the Baltic provinces of Estland, Livland and Kurland. They did not enter the Russian Empire as immigrants to colonize land at the invitation of Catherine II and her successors. Instead they already formed the dominant social and economic strata of the Baltic provinces when Peter I conquered the regions of Livland and Estland from Sweden in 1721 and Kurland from Poland in 1795. The Treaty of Nystadt allowed the Baltic Germans to maintain their regional dominance after incorporation into the Russian Empire. The Baltic German elite unlike the vast majority of ethnic Germans to come under Russian rule consisted of a noble class and a burgher class. They traced their origins back respectively to the crusading orders of the Teutonic and later Livonian Knights and the Hanseatic League. After the incorporation of the Baltic provinces into the Russian Empire, the Baltic Germans became heavily represented in the Imperial military, civil service, and merchant class. Many of them also acculturated into the Russian nobility. Their integration into the elite of the Russian Empire gave them a radically different social status than the German colonists living in isolated rural settlements.[34] After the break up of the Russian Empire this distinction was maintained due to the divergent history of the Baltic States and USSR during the 1920s and 1930s.

More importantly for this study the Baltic Germans have no historical connection to the German settlements east of the Urals. Very few of the ethnic Germans to end up in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and Siberia were descended of Baltic Germans. During Tsarist times German settlers in the Steppe and Turkestan came primarily from the Volga and Black Sea regions. After the Bolshevik

34 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, pp. 14–18.

Revolution the Baltic Germans came under the rule of the newly independent Latvian and Estonian states rather than Soviet Russia. In 1940, the German government resettled the vast majority of the Baltic Germans in areas of Poland annexed recently by Germany. The German government evacuated a total of 52,498 Germans from Latvia and 14,368 from Estonia in this operation.[35] This represented the vast majority, 93% of the 72,000 ethnic Germans living in Estonia and Latvia at the time.[36] The Baltic Germans thus largely avoided the deportations, special settlement restrictions, and mobilization into the labor army that played such an important role in the historical construction of the Russian Germans as a single nationality.

German speaking settlers began large scale agricultural settlement in the Russian Empire after 1763. Until the 1880s, however, this settlement remained largely confined west of the Urals. It is only after this time that the Russian Germans begin to establish permanent colonies in Central Asia and later Siberia. None of the German settlements in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and Siberia came from Central Europe directly. Instead they migrated from already established German colonies in the Volga and Black Sea regions of the Russian Empire. They are thus often referred to as daughter colonies to distinguish them from the mother colonies established by immigrants that came directly from Central Europe to the Russian Empire.

The formation of German colonies in the Russian Empire started in 1764 in the Volga region as a result of a deliberate policy by Empress Catherine II to attract foreign settlers from Europe. The Empress issued a short and vague Manifesto on 4 December 1762 inviting foreigners to settle in the Russian Empire. This first manifesto, however, did not lead to much immigration before she issued a second longer and more concrete manifesto.[37] On 22 July

35 Tillmann Tegeler, "The Expulsion of the German Speakers from the Baltic States" in Prauser and Rees, p. 74.

36 Polian, p. 32.

37 A.A. German, ed., *Istoriia respubliki nemtsev povolzh'ia: V sobytiiakh, faktakh, dokumentakh*, Moscow: Gotika, 2000, p. 31.

1763 she issued another more detailed manifesto inviting foreigners to settle in the Russian Empire. This manifesto granted these colonists a wide array of privileges not enjoyed by the vast majority of Russian subjects. The benefits promised to the colonists included free land, freedom of religion, freedom from taxes for up to 30 years, interest free loans, the right to govern their own internal and judicial affairs in the colonies in accordance with Russian civil law, and freedom from military conscription forever.[38] The lure of free farm land and a wide array of rights not available to many people living in Central Europe created a strong pull factor to attract immigration to the Russian Empire.

At the same time conditions in Central Europe created strong push factors encouraging emigration from the region. The Seven Years War and its attendant destruction made settlement in the Russian Empire appear very attractive to many of the German speaking people of Central Europe. A desire to escape the conditions prevailing in the various small German states that suffered from this war represented a significant motivating factor pushing many Germans to immigrate to the Russian Empire.

The first large influx of German settlers to rural areas of the Russian Empire occurred in the late 18th Century. Between 1763 and 1766 around 22,000 Europeans, mostly Germans but also French, Scandinavians, and others arrived on the shores of the Volga in the vicinity of Saratov. The Russian government settled these colonists along the Volga River in the south east of European Russia. Already on 19 March 1764 the Russian government passed an agrarian law to give each colonist family 30 desiatins of land.[39] They thus formed a buffer between European Russia and hostile Asian nomadic people such as the Kazakhs, Kalmyks, and Bashkirs.

The settlement of the Volga region by German colonists occurred rapidly. Between 1762 and 1774 a total of 31,900 colonists

38 V.A. Auman, V.A.V.G. Chebotareva, V.G., eds., *Istoriia rossiiskikh nemstev v dokumentakh vol. I, (1763–1992 gg.)*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi institut gumanitarnykh programm, 1993, pp. 18–21.

39 German 2000, p. 31.

from the Rhine, Hesse, Prussia, Alsace, Baden, Wuerttemburg, Saxony, and northern Germany settled in the Volga region.[40] German colonists established a total of 104 settlements along the Volga River. Most of these colonies, 66 to be exact consisted of Lutherans while a little over a third, 38 were Catholic.[41] On 30 April 1766 the Russian government established the "Special Office of the Guardianship Chancellory for Foreigners."[42] Four years later on 25 February 1770, the above office issued instructions on the internal order and administration of the colonies. However, on 20 April 1782, Empress Catherine II abolished this office and transferred the colonists to be ruled by the general state administration of peasants.[43] The settlements along the Volga River formed the largest compact German settlements in the Russian Empire and USSR for over 150 years.

The growth of the Volga German colonies, however, soon ceased and the population even declined during the latter 18th Century. Due to the harsh conditions endured by the colonists their population shrank to 28,200 by 1782 as a result of excess deaths. The German colonists had started settling on the shores of the Volga for only a short time when they suffered devastating plundering. The first assaults took place during the Pugachev uprising already in 1773–1774.[44] Kazakh raids on the colonies started as early as 1774 and continued to be a major problem for the colonies on the left bank of the Volga through 1776. On 15 August 1776, Kazakhs sacked the recently established colony of Mariental. Earlier they had assaulted the village of Pfannenstiel. Out of 104 Volga German colonies established since 1762, Kazakh nomads had completely destroyed three by 1785. The Kazakhs

40 V.M. Kabuzan, *Emigratsiia I reemigratsiia v rossii v XVIII–nachale XX veka.* Moscow: Nauka, 1998, pp. 31–32.

41 Viktor Krieger, Kampen, Hans, and Paulsen, Nina. *Deutsche aus Russland gestern und heute: Volk auf dem Weg*. Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, 2006, p. 4.

42 German 2000, p. 32.

43 A.A. German and I.R. Pleve, *Nemtsy povolzh'ia: Kratkii istoricheskie ocherk.* Saratov: Saratov University, 2002, p. 68.

44 German 2000, p. 32.

sold the survivors of these raids into slavery in the Emirate of Bukhara and Khanate of Khiva. Only in the second half of the 19th Century did the Volga German colonists normalize their relationship with the Kazakhs.[45] The earlier damage done to the Volga German colonists by the Kazakhs, however, remained an important part of the collective memory of the settlers. The ruthless attacks by the Kazakhs upon Volga German villages became an integral part of the historical narrative the German settlers constructed about their early history in the Russian Empire.

Tsar Paul I the son of Catherine II restored both communal self rule and a special government administrative office for the Volga German colonies that had been abolished in 1782. The first step of this restoration took place on 4 March 1797 with the creation of a new office of guardianship for foreigners. A form of the office would be maintained by Tsar Paul the First's successor Alexander I and was eliminated by Alexander II. This office went through a number of changes in name and organization from 30 June 1797 to 1857 before being dismantled from 1871–1877. The right of self governance for the colonies was officially restored on 17 September 1800 and lasted until 4 June 1871. After this latter date they had the same legal status in the Russian Empire as former serfs that had been freed in 1861 by Alexander II.[46] The Germans in the Russian Empire enjoyed the privileges and rights of the 1763 Manifesto from 1764 to 1782 (18 years) and again from 1800 to 1871 (71 years). From 1871 until 1918, they had the same legal position as freed serfs.

Initially the Volga Germans did not engage in the Russian practice of land redistribution. But, rather received and farmed the land in 30 desiatiian portions as families.[47] Later many Volga German colonists adopted the communal system of land tenure practiced by Russian peasants. That is they periodically redistributed the usufruct of the land among the villagers based upon the

45 Viktor Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh: Iz istorii nemtsev Tsentral'noi Azii*. Almaty: Daik-Press, 2006, p. 50.
46 German 2000, pp. 33–34.
47 German 2000, pp. 31–32.

number of people working the land. Although German villages in the Volga differed in most aspects from the surrounding Russian population some did practice a form of land tenure very similar to the Russian *mir.*[48] Other German colonies in Russia did not follow this adaptation.

On 12 March 1840, the government made new lands in the Volga region available to the Volga German colonists. This additional land allowed for the formation of daughter colonies by the inhabitants of the mother colonies in the region.[49] Between 1847–1864 this new land was used for German settlers to establish new colonies in the Volga region. A total of 61 new colonies were established in the Volga region during this time. They established 50 of these colonies on the left bank of the Volga River. In addition to this internal colonization the Volga region also received a number of new Mennonite colonists from Prussia during this time. Mennonites established six new colonies in the Volga between 1853–1862. This brought the total number of Mennonite colonies in the Volga region up to 10.[50] This period marked the end of new expansion of the Volga Germans through new immigration during the Tsarist era. From this point on all population increase among the colonists in this particular geographical region was a result of natural population growth. After 1871 emigration rather than immigration marked the population movement of the Volga Germans.

Outside of the Volga region the largest and most important area of German settlement in the Russian Empire was the Black Sea region in present day Ukraine. Germans established their first colony in Ukraine at Belowescher during 1765.[51] Settlement in Ukraine, however, remained limited until the 1780s due to the presence of the Crimean Khanate in much of southern Ukraine.

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48 Andreas Kappleler. *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*. Trans. Alfred Clayton. Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2001, p. 51.

49 German and Pleve, p. 68.

50 German 2000, p. 34.

51 Krieger et al., p. 21.

The defeat and annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783 opened up southern Ukraine and Crimea to the mass settlement of German and other colonists. The Russian government extended the area available to settlement for immigrants to the Black Sea region in 1786.[52] The Russian government sent a special envoy that year to the German states to recruit colonists for New Russia. Among the first groups of settlers to take advantage of this offer were Mennonites from Prussia.

The Mennonites are one of the Anabaptist groups that emerged from the 30 years war. They emerged in 1525. Named after the Menno Simmons, the Mennonites are a pacifist sect that practice adult baptism and abjure from the swearing of oaths. Both their pacifism and opposition to swearing oaths has made their relationship with their various host states difficult. This has especially been true regarding the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union.

From 1787 onward Mennonites from the region around Danzig began moving to settle in the Russian Empire.[53] In the spring of 1789 a group of 228 Mennonite families from West Prussia arrived in New Russia and the following year established eight colonies.[54] In the next century the Black Sea region became the second large area of German settlement in the Russian Empire after the Volga.

The Mennonites were classified as a sub-group of the Russian Germans by both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union because they spoke a dialect of German, Plautdietsch[55], despite being primarily of Dutch descent. In 1800 Tsar Paul I granted a charter of privileges to Mennonite settlers foreshadowing Tsar Alexander I issuing a Manifesto regarding settlement in the Black Sea region in 1804. The Mennonites created a prosperous commonwealth with

52 Kabuzan 1998, p. 47.

53 A.A. German, T.C. Ilarionova, and Pleve, I.R., *Istoriia nemtsev Rossii.* Moscow: MSNK Press, 2005. p. 79.

54 Krongardt, *Nemtsy v Kygystane 1880–1990 gg.* Bishkek: Ilim, 1997, p. 16 and German et al., p. 81.

55 Plautdietsch or Low German is in fact more closely related to Dutch than it is to High German.

their own network of institutions in their Black Sea colonies. After 1882 a number of Mennonites from this region would migrate eastward to Central Asia. They constituted the first German settlers in what is now Kyrgyzstan.

Large scale German settlement of the Black Sea region began in the early 19th Century. The damage caused to Central Europe by the Napoleonic Wars helped spur this migration just as the Seven Year War had contributed to the settlement of the Volga. The first mass arrivals began in 1803 in response to Alexander I opening up this territory to foreign settlement by issuing formal invitations. On 20 February 1804 Alexander I issued a new manifesto to replace the one issued by his grandmother on 22 July 1763. This manifesto was more restrictive than the one issued in 1763. This did not, however, deter a flood of German settlers to the region during the next half century. Not even the official end of settlement in Russia by foreign agricultural colonists in 1819 completely stopped this influx. On 5 August 1819 the Russian government officially decreed an end to allowing foreign colonists to settle in the empire. On 25 October 1819 the government put teeth into this termination when it prohibited Russian missions abroad from issuing documents to foreigners to settle in Russia or Congress Poland. By the 1860s some 70,000 German colonists had migrated to New Russia.[56] The Black Sea German population continued rapidly expanding due to natural growth during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Between 1858 and 1914 their population grew from 136,000 to over 660,000.[57] The Black Sea German population expansion was accompanied by an even more dramatic increase in their land holdings.

The Black Sea German settlers did not follow the Volga German colonists in adopting the Russian communal land tenure system of the *mir.* Instead they received individual family plots of land that they entailed. This practice prevented the estates from being broken up or reduced. The entire undivided landed prop-

56 Kabuzan 1998, pp. 58–59.
57 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 21.

erty of the family head passed on to one son who had to pay money to the remaining heirs. Many of the Black Sea Germans who inherited no land used the money they received in lieu of land along with communally based credit associations to purchase or lease their own land from non-Germans. This practice rapidly increased the amount of land held by German colonists in New Russia from 10% in 1890 to 17% in 1912.[58] The Black Sea Germans became one of the most prosperous agricultural communities in the Russian Empire as a result.

A third area of German settlement in the Russian Empire was the North Caucasus. This region attracted far fewer colonists than either the Volga or the Black Sea region. During the first half of the 19th Century, German settlers established seven colonies in the North Caucasus. By the second half of the 19th Century their total population numbered 23,904 of which the largest was Kanovo (Kanaan) with 10,800 inhabitants.[59] During the 20th Century this population would greatly expand.

Two other areas of German settlement in the Russian Empire during the early 19th Century were Bessarabia and the Transcaucasus. The Russian Empire acquired Bessarabia after defeating the Ottoman Empire in 1812. In response to a decree by Tsar Alexander I on 29 November 1813 granting land, exemption from military service, and religious freedom, a large number of Germans settled in this newly acquired territory.[60] These settlers arrived from Poland, Wuerttemburg, and Prussia. By 1834 nearly 16,000 Germans lived in Bessarabia.[61] By 1897 the rural German population in Bessarabia had increased to 60,206 or 3.1% of the population in the territory.[62] Between 1815 and 1818 around two thou-

58 Eric Lohr. *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 87.
59 German et al., doc. 3.4.1, p. 59.
60 Ute Schmidt, "Germans in Bessarabia: Historical Background and Present-Day Relations," *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2008), p. 308.
61 Kabuzan 1998, table 6, p. 61.
62 Lohr, table 5, p. 136.

sand German colonists from Wuerttemburg settled in Georgia.[63] By 1914 there were nearly 12,000 Germans in the Transcaucasus.[64] These two areas of settlement remained far less significant than either the Volga or Black Sea or even the North Caucasian regions. Chronologically the last wave of German immigrants into the Russian Empire settled in Volhynia. By 1884 there were 120,395 Germans living in this region.[65] The 1897 census showed 171,331 rural Germans in the region, 5.7% of the territory's population. By 1912 this population exceeded 211,000.[66] The Volhynian Germans generally engaged in *Khutor* agriculture. That is they cultivated individual family farms separated from their living quarters often by a substantial distance.[67] Ironically, while the Volhynian Germans constituted the last wave of German immigrants into the Russian Empire they were also the first group to be forcibly displaced. During World War One, the Russian military deported the majority of the Volhynian Germans. From July 1915 to June 1916 alone they deported nearly 130,000 Germans from Volhynia to areas of the Russian Empire further east.[68] A substantial number of these deportees found themselves sent to join their ethnic brethren along the Volga. This earlier deportation started the process of consolidating the various German groups in the Russian Empire into a single conscious nationality.[69] The much larger deportations during World War Two would greatly accelerate this development.

The German population of the Russian Empire continued to grow significantly during the first half of the 19th Century. Much of this increase was a direct result of immigration. The total number of German agricultural colonists to settle in the Russian Empire during this time exceeded 114,000.[70] In 1795 the vast majority

63 Kabuzan 1998, p. 59.
64 German et al., p. 187.
65 German et al., doc. 4.2.2., p. 85.
66 Lohr, table 5, p. 136.
67 Lohr, p. 120.
68 Lohr, table 4, p. 135.
69 Lohr, pp. 155–157.
70 Kabuzan 1998, p. 59.

of Germans living under the rule of St. Petersburg lived in the Baltic Provinces or Poland. The Russian Germans proper formed less than 50,000 out of over 237,000 German speakers in the Russian Empire. Settlers on the Volga constituted 37,200 people at this time and the colonies in New Russia were considerably smaller with 5,500 people. By 1834 the Russian German population had grown to 137,400 Volga Germans and 85,600 Black Sea Germans versus nearly 100,000 Baltic Germans and 212,300 in Congress Poland. Finally, by 1858 the Volga Germans reached 210,900 and the Black Sea Germans 138,800 out of a total German speaking population of 840,300.[71] The Tsarist leadership subsidized the founding of 218 foreign settlements in the Russian Empire from 1800–1850. By 1893 there were 505 foreign colonies, mostly German in the Russian Empire.[72] The rapid growth of the Volga and Black Sea colonists during this time put considerable pressure on the settlers to acquire new land to farm. By the end of the century this required moving beyond the confines of the Volga and Black Sea regions. Emigration overseas to the US, Canada, and Latin America constituted one option for dealing with this problem on an individual family level. Internal migration eastward within the Russian Empire constituted another possible solution

A series of reforms by the Russian government after 1871 provided additional push factors for Russian German migration both to the Western Hemisphere and eastern regions of the Russian Empire during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In general these reforms stripped the German colonists of their previously guaranteed privileges and reduced them to the same legal status as the Russian peasantry freed from serfdom in 1861. On 4 June 1871, Tsar Alexander II repealed the privileges granted to the colonists by Catherine II. Between 1871–1877 the Tsarist government gradually implemented these reforms.[73] One of the greatest losses of privileges by the German colonists was the introduction of

71 Kabuzan 1998, table 6, p. 61.
72 Auman and Chebotareva, p. 7.
73 German 2000, p. 34.

universal conscription in the Russian Empire on 1 January 1874.[74] After this date most Germans in the Russian Empire were subject to military conscription and subsequent mobilization from the reserves.

**Table 1: Number of Germans in the Russian Empire according to the 1897 Census[75]**

| | |
|---|---|
| Volga Region | 396,000 |
| Black Sea Region | 378,000 |
| Volhynia | 171,000 |
| St. Petersburg | 50,000 |
| Tsarist Poland | 407,000 |
| The Baltic Provinces | 166,000[76] |
| Other Regions | 277,000 |
| Total | 1,800,000 |

Germans in the Black Sea region and Volga region began to move east to settle in Kazakhstan and Central Asia during the late 19th Century. The lack of available land for a growing population in the Black Sea region and the 1891–1892 Volga famine were major contributors to this formation of daughter colonies. This movement occurred at the same time as large scale emigration out of the Russian Empire by ethnic Germans. They settled in various countries in western hemisphere, most notably the US, Canada, Argentina, and Brazil.

The number of Germans in the Black Sea region lacking land had already reached over a quarter of their population by the early 1870s. But, in some areas of the Black Sea region the number of German families without any land reached over 60%.[77] This lack of land was a major factor in pushing Germans to move east into

74 German 2000, p. 35.
75 German and Kurochkin, p. 18.
76 This number is overinflated by the inclusion of a number of Jews that spoke German as their native language, particularly in Livland. Only counting ethnic Germans results in a number of around 148,225. G.I. Vigrab, *Pribaltiiskie Nemtsy: Ikh otnoshenie k russkoi gosudarstvennosti I korennomu naseleniiu krai v proshlom I nastoiashem.* Yur'yev (Tartu), Estonia: Postimees, 1916, p. 3.
77 Krongardt, p. 18.

Kazakhstan, Siberia, and Central Asia in the late 19th Century as well as migrate overseas.

Another major factor in eastward migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the introduction of conscription in the German colonies. In particular the Mennonites opposed this expansion as it violated their religious creed. After 1879, Mennonites in all parts of the Russian Empire were allowed to do alternative service in forestry work and to a lesser extent as fire fighters and in the merchant marine. Another option was to move to Turkestan where they along with all other European settlers and natives were immune from military service. The male children of European settlers in Turkestan, however, were subject to conscription from ages 15 to 20. This was served in Turkestan. Provided their family had arrived in the Russian Empire before 1 July 1874, Mennonites in Turkestan could do alternative service by planting trees.[78] Migration to Central Asia was thus seen as a way to avoid military service at least for the first generations of arrivals.

The first movement of ethnic Germans into Central Asia took place in 1880. From 3 July 1880 to 18 October 1880 ten families with 18 wagons ventured from Samara to Tashkent annexed by the Russian Empire from the Kokand Khanate. Some of these settlers emigrated to the US after remaining in limbo in Tashkent for two years. Others attempted to get permission from the Emir of Bukhara to settle in his realm. Emir Muzafar refused to allow the Germans to enter Bukhara because they did not veil their women. Instead the Khan of Khiva granted them the right to settle in his territory in 1882. On 16 April 1884 they founded the colony of Ak-Mechet in the Khanate of Khiva.[79] This was the only German colony to be established in any of the Muslim ruled Emirates and Khanates that would later become part of the USSR.

Despite setting out in 1880 the colonists that established Ak-Mechet spent four years before they could actually establish the settlement. This meant that the first settlements actually estab-

78 Krongardt, pp. 19–20.

79 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* pp. 10–11 and Krongardt, p. 25.

lished in Central Asia by Germans were in the Talas valley in 1882. The Tsarist government made 1,042 desiatins of land available in the Talas Valley for Mennonites from the western regions of the Russian Empire to settle. During 1882–1883 the villages of Nikolaipol', Gnadental, and Gnadenfeld in what is now western Kyrgyzstan were established by 62 Mennonite families from Tarvida in the Black Sea region. The village of Keppental was established at the same time by 10 Mennonite families from Samara in the Volga region. Local Mennonites from these settlements founded the village of Orlov in 1890 which began to receive Lutheran German famine refugees from the Volga during the 1891–1892 famine. The Lutherans soon became the majority of the population of Orlov.[80] These were the first non-Mennonite German colonists in Central Asia.

A famine struck the Volga region in 1891–1892. This famine caused devastating losses to the region's population including the German colonists. In 1892 the number of deaths in excess of births in Saratov Gubernii was 34,400 and that in Samara Gubernii was 49,700 for a net loss through deaths of nearly 85,000 people.[81] A much larger number of people including a substantial number of Volga Germans migrated to either eastern regions of the Russian Empire or abroad to avoid this famine.

This famine in the Volga and the subsequent cholera epidemic lasting until 1895 drove a significant number of Lutheran colonists to settle in Kazakhstan and other Asian parts of the Russian Empire. They settled in Konstantinovka, Rozhdestvenka, and Romanovka in Kazakhstan during this time. Others went even further and settled in Krestov and Saratov in what is today Turkmenistan.[82] By 1897 the number of Germans living in Central Asia had reached 8,874.[83] It would continue to grow in the early 20th century and by 1914 reached 50,166 people more than five times

80 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, pp. 11–13 and Krongardt, p. 21.
81 Kabuzan 1998, p. 103.
82 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* pp. 13–14 and 52.
83 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 13.

what it had been just 17 years before.[84] This rapid growth would be replicated in Siberia as well.

The German colonies in Siberia were mostly established in the early 20th century. The 1897 census put the number of Germans in Siberia as still only 5,424.[85] The Stolypin reforms gave land ownership to most of the Volga Germans. But, a number remained landless or had insufficient land to provide a living. Many of these Germans moved to Siberia from 1907 to 1914 to acquire land.[86] So that by 1914 the ethnic German population of Siberia numbered 44,838 people.[87] This was an increase by a factor over nine times from the number recorded in the 1897 census.

The early 20th century saw continued rapid development among the German colonists in the Volga region. In 1908 the Russian Empire had a German population of 2,070,000 people. Of these 206,000 (6.9% of the territory's total population) lived in Saratov Gubernni and 180,000 (8.2% of the territory's total population) in Saratov.[88] The 386,000 ethnic Germans in the Volga region represented almost a fifth of the Germans in the empire. By 1909 the German villages in the Volga had 350 schools and the highest literacy rate in the Russian Empire.[89] On the eve of the outbreak of World War One the Volga region of the Russian Empire had over 200 German colonies with over 400,000 people. They cultivated over 1.3 million hectares of land.[90] That year they harvested 473,000 tons of grain. The territory had also developed industries producing textiles, agricultural implements, milled flour, lumber, and leather.[91] The Volga Germans had proven themselves to be quite successful by 1914 when World War I broke out.

84 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 22.
85 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 13.
86 German 2000, p. 35.
87 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 22.
88 Auman and Chebatoreva, p. 7.
89 German 2000, p. 9.
90 German 2000, p. 9.
91 German 2000, p. 10.

# 5 Ethnic Germans in the Early USSR

World War I was followed by the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Civil War, and the creation of the Volga German Workers' Commune. The Civil War between 1918–1921 involved an incredible amount of violence in the areas of German settlement in the Volga and Ukraine. The Bolshevik policies of confiscating grain and other goods from the German colonists was quite unpopular. The final defeat of Russia at the hands of Germany was finally recognized by the Bolsheviks with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918. Articles 21 and 22 allowed Germans in Russia to emigrate to Germany and transfer their capital for a period of 10 years.[92] The defeat of Germany on 11 November 1918 effectively ended this treaty. The month before the defeat of Germany, the Bolshevik government created an autonomous German national territory on the Volga. The SNK (Council of People's Commissars) of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic) under the signature of Lenin himself formed the Volga German Workers' Commune on 19 October 1918. This decree had seven points that established the territory as an ethno-national state for the Germans in the Volga region.[93] It did not, however, appease all the national grievances by the Volga Germans against the Bolsheviks. During 4–8 January 1919 the inhabitants of Warenburg waged an anti-Bolshevik uprising. The Bolsheviks put down this uprising with considerable violence.[94] The Civil War only ended in 1921 and was followed by a devastating famine in the Volga region and Ukraine.

Following the end of the Civil War the Volga region suffered a horrific famine in 1921–1922. It was caused by a drought and the mass forced requisition of food. In particular the Bolsheviks had conducted a ruthless confiscation of grain from the German colo-

92 Auman and Chebatoreva, p. 71.
93 Auman and Chebatoreva, pp. 75–76.
94 German 2000, p. 42.

nies in the Volga region in 1919–1920.[95] This massive famine struck the German colonies of the Volga region hard.[96] German and Kurochkin estimate that the German colonies in the Volga alone suffered 150,000 famine deaths during this time.[97] Victor Krieger gives much lower numbers estimating the total ethnic German losses due to Civil War and famine from 1918–1922 at 180,000 to 200,000 of which the Volga colonies accounted for 108,000 and those in the Black Sea region 50,000–60,000.[98] These numbers would have been much greater had it not been for the provision of massive foreign famine relief. In particular the American Relief Administration and International Union for Assisting Children founded by Friedjof Nansen managed to provide life saving food aid to 91% of the population of the Volga German Worker's Commune, some 435,864 people in 1922.[99] This assistance undoubtedly saved millions of lives in the former Russian Empire as a whole and hundreds of thousands of Germans, especially in the Volga region. However, it was the end of forced requisitioning and allowing peasants to keep and sell the bulk of their agricultural production during the New Economic Policy from 1921 to 1928 that allowed the Volga German Worker's Commune and then ASSR as well as German settlements in Ukraine and elsewhere to recover from the ravages of the Civil War and famine.

The Soviet government transferred the capital of the territory of the Volga German Workers' Commune from Marx formerly Ekaterinenstadt to Engels formerly Pokrovsk.[100] The All Russian Executive Committee ordered this transfer on 22 June 1922. This decree also rounded out the territory of the Volga German Worker's Commune to give it greatly expanded borders.[101] This

95 German and Pleve, p. 32.
96 German 2000, p. 10.
97 German and Kurochkin, p. 21.
98 Viktor Krieger, *Bundesburger*, pp. 240–242.
99 German and Pleve, p. 34.
100 A. Spack, *Administrativno-Territorial'nye preobrazovaniia v Nempovolzh'e 1764–1944 gg*. Internet Resource Geschichte der Wolgadeutschen, 2012, p. 8.
101 Auman and Chebatoreva, p. 80.

rounding out increased the land area of the autonomous territory by 39% to 25,700 square kilometers. It increased its population by 64% to 527,800 people of which Germans were 67.5%, Russians 21.1%, Ukrainians 9.7% and others 1.7%. This expansion resulted in the territory having 14 cantons.[102] It would keep these borders until the Soviet government dissolved the territory in September 1941.

The TsIK (Central Executive Committee) and SNK upgraded the Volga German Workers' Commune to the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on 20 February 1924. This directive had 11 points. The third point noted the nine areas over which the ASSR had authority and established governing commissariats. These were internal affairs, justice, education, health, labor, finance, agriculture, labor, social provision, workers-peasant inspectorate, and a council of people's economy.[103] During the 1920s the Volga German ASSR made an economic recovery from the damage done to both its agriculture and industry in the Civil War and subsequent famine. It also developed politically as an ethnic state within the USSR ruled by the Communist Party.[104] On 31 January 1926 the Volga German ASSR received an extensive constitution with 314 articles.[105] This was the first of two constitutions that would govern the territory before its abolition in 1941.

The three main trends in the Volga German ASSR during the 1920s were economic recovery and growth, particularly in the agricultural sector, the expansion of political mechanisms of control such as the Communist Party, and the development of cultural institutions in accordance with "*korenizatsiia*" (indigenization). In 1924 the Volga German ASSR hit a nadir in grain production at only 14,200 tons harvested. Four years later they recorded a record harvest of 687,100 tons of grain. Likewise the number of work animals in the republic increased from 50,400 in 1923 to 152,800 in

102 German and Pleve, p. 35.
103 Auman and Chebatoreva, pp. 80–82.
104 German 2000, p. 15.
105 Auman and Chebatoreva, pp. 82–136

1928. The Communist Party membership in the territory was quite small and thus was able to achieve rapid growth in the 1920s. The number of members and candidates more than doubled from 1,100 in April 1924 to 2,500 in April 1928. This period also saw the growth of the Komsomol, labor unions, and other social organizations used by the Communist Party dominated state to mobilize and politically mobilize the population. In the Volga German ASSR the main goals of *korenizatsiia* were to strengthen the position of the Germans as the titular nationality and the role of the German language in all spheres of social life including all state organs and institutions.[106] Their success in strengthening the role of Germans as the titular nationality of the Volga German ASSR can be seen from the summary report presented in 1928 described below.

Not too long before collectivization and the first five year plan the leadership of the Volga German ASSR issued a report to the presidiums of the TsIK and SNK of the RSFSR. This report came some time after 20 March 1928. The ASSR had three levels of governance. The smallest were the village soviets. The territory had 288 village soviets with 786 population points. Above these were 12 cantons down from 14 in 1922 which had the same status as raions in other regions of the USSR. These cantons were divided by nationality into three categories. The first were German cantons which allowed for the full support of a Soviet version of German ethnic culture. There were five such cantons. Then there were three cantons to represent the Russian and Ukrainian minorities and four mixed cantons where both Germans and Slavs lived. The 1926 census listed a total population of 571,754 people of which 87.2% lived in rural areas and only 12.8% in urban areas. A full 82.5% worked in farming. In contrast only 6.3% worked in factories. Another 6.3% worked in handicrafts and 4.9% in other occupations. The capital of Pokrovsk had a total of 35,000 people. The ethnic composition of the territory was 66.4% German, 20%

106 German and Pleve, 36.

Russian, 12% Ukrainian, and 1.6% others.[107] The ASSR still consisted mostly of ethnic German farmers with both urban dwellers and Russians a distinct minority.

The ethnic division of the governing bodies of the Volga German ASSR represented the percentages of the population as a whole. In 1928, the TsIK had 79 members of which 53 (67.1%) were German, 13 Russian, 10 Ukrainian, and 3 other. The SNK had 10 Germans, 2 Russians, and one Ukrainian for a total of 13 members. The Presidium of the TsIK had eleven members of which 6 were Germans, 3 Russians, one Ukrainian, and one other. The canton soviet executives had a total of 237 members of which 161 (67.9%) were Germans, 49 Russians, 24 Ukrainians, and 3 others. Finally, the presidiums of the canton executive committees had 91 members of which 64 (70.3%) were Germans, 15 Russians, and 12 Ukrainians.[108] The two thirds of the population of the Volga German ASSR of German ethnicity thus also held a proportional number of symbolic positions of power in the territory.

The other part of *korenizatsiia* required creating German language institutions such as schools and publications. During the 1920s the Soviets built 34 libraries, 80 reading huts, 2 museums, 35 clubs, and 14 cinemas in the Volga German ASSR. There was also a small German language book publisher in Pokrovsk dedicated mostly to textbooks and propaganda literature. The territory at this time published two Communist Party newspapers, one in Russian and one in German. These were *Trudovaiia Pravda* and *Nachrichten*. It also published irregularly in German the Komsomol paper *Rote Jugend* and the Pioneer paper *Sei bereit!* which also had Russian language versions. It also published an economic journal which was the most respected German language journal in the USSR from 1922–1927, *Unsere Wirtschaft*. Conflict between the editors and the political leadership led to the end of the journal in

107 V.G. Chebotareva, ed., *Nemtsy soiuza SSR: Drama Velikikh potriasenie, 1922–1939 gg. Arkhivye, dokumenty, kommentary*, vol. I. Moscow: Public Academy of Sciences of Russian Germans and ANO "Center of German Culture", 2009, pp. 55–56.

108 Chebatoreva, vol. 1, pp. 59–60.

late 1927.[109] The creation of a small German language print culture in the Volga German ASSR that was ideologically socialist and Soviet got its start in the 1920s and would expand in the 1930s before being terminated in 1941.

**Table 2: Total Population of Territory of Volga German ASSR, 1918–1941[110]**

| Year | Total Population |
|---|---|
| 1914 (In territory that would become ASSRdWD) | 649,300 |
| 1920 | 660,800 |
| 1923 | 502,200 |
| 1926 | 571,800 |
| 1930 | 633,400 |
| 1932 | 580,400 |
| 1934 | 433,500 |
| 1937 | 489,900 |
| 1939 | 566,700<br>(The 1939 Census number is 606,500) |
| 1941 | 605,600 |

As can be seen from this table the population decreased significantly from 1920 to 1923 due to excess deaths and flight due to the 1921–1922 famine. There again is a large decrease from 1930 to 1932 due to dekulakization and an even larger reduction from 1932 to 1934 as a result of the 1932–1933 famine. It is not possible from these figures to disentangle the German majority from the Russian and other minorities in the Volga German ASSR and earlier Volga German Workers' Commune. Nor is it possible to quantify how many were deaths in excess of births versus people either fleeing or being forcibly deported from the territory.

Outside the Volga German ASSR the German minorities in the USSR received 17 national raions (districts) in European and Caucasian republics in the USSR.[111] In 1925 they had five such

109 German and Pleve, p. 38.

110 German 2000, p. 247.

111 Ann Sheehy and Bohdan Nahaylo, *The Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and Meskhetians: Soviet Treatment of some national minorities*. London: Minority Rights Group, 1986, p. 18.

districts in Ukraine alone. This had increased to seven in 1926. In 1929 they had 11 such raions in the USSR as a whole of which 8 were located in the Ukrainian SSR. By 1934 this had grown to 16. In addition to the 8 in Ukraine were 6 in the RSFSR, one in Georgia, and one in Azerbaijan.[112] These raions had much smaller infrastructures to support German language education, media, and culture than the Volga German ASSR. Nonetheless, they did provide for German cultural institutions for many of the German settlements in Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

In addition to these national territories the Mennonites in the USSR also had two extra territorial organizations that had a number of unique economic powers granted to them by the Soviet government. There were extensive networks of Mennonite cooperatives that also sought to politically represent the group in negotiations with the Soviet authorities. One was the VMSR (Union of Mennonites in Southern Russia) in Ukraine.[113] The second was the AMLV (All Russian Mennonite Agricultural Society) in the RSFSR. In Kyrgyzstan the AMLV was very active during the years 1923 to 1927. The Mennonite village of Nikolaipol' which the Soviets renamed Leninpol' became a center of activism for the AMLV. In 1924 the meetings of the AMLV in this village dealt with the problems of sick cattle and land distribution in the region outside of Bishkek.[114] The Soviet government banned the AMLV in 1927 and its successor Edelweis in 1928.[115] For a brief time the Mennonite cooperative movement provided an economic alternative to the state command economy being built by the Soviet government.

During this time the Germans in Kyrgyzstan also managed to have some input into their political affairs. Like other ethnic minorities in the territory the Germans actively sought to influence the drawing of the borders of volosts within Kyrgyzstan. Uzbeks,

112 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 39.

113 John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Russia, 1921–1927*.Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1967, pp. 53–58.

114 TsGAKR F. 2040, O. 1, D. 3, ll. 104–105, 163, 314.

115 Krieger *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 98.

Dungans, and Uyghers also engaged in similar activities.[116] In 1926 the German village of Gruenfeld asked to be merged with the Ukrainian village of Yur'evka and be included in Chui Volost rather than Tokmak Oblast. The Germans argued for national and economic reasons they wanted to be part of a European majority volost rather than a Kyrgyz majority one.[117] Gruenfeld and Yur'evka together had 120 people versus 4,800 Kyrgyz in Tokmak Volost.[118] Their desire to not be vastly outnumbered on the volost level by much larger Kyrgyz populations drove much of the minority politics in Kyrgyzstan during the 1920s.

The German population of Kazakhstan like that in Kyrgyzstan remained primarily rural in 1926. It also remained concentrated in the northern regions of Akmola, Kustanai, and Semipalitinsk. A statistical report of 20 November 1926 gives the geographical distribution listed in the table below.

**Table 3: Location of Germans in Kazakhstan 1926[119]**

| Gubernii | Urban | Rural | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ural | 163 | 569 | 732 |
| Aktuibinsk | 101 | 1833 | 1934 |
| Kustanai | 151 | 13258 | 13409 |
| Akmola | 617 | 21181 | 21798 |
| Semipalatinsk | 711 | 8344 | 9055 |
| Total | 1743 | 45185 | 46928 |

In the mid-1920s, Soviet repression of religion increased. Among other groups the Soviet government targeted the Mennonites in Kyrgyzstan and other parts of Central Asia. A report from the Alie-Ata (Jambul) committee of the CPSU regarding education in Nikolaipol' dated 9 February 1924 signaled greater repression of believers. The report is concerned with local Germans using the local schools to teach religion. It states that providing religious

116 TsGAKR, F. 949, O. 3, D 38, l. 18.
117 TsGAKR, F. 949, O. 3, D. 38, l. 17.
118 TsGAKR, F. 949, O. 3, D. 38, ll. 5–6.
119 G.A. Karpykova, ed. *Iz istorii nemtsev Kazakhstana (1921–1975), Sbornik dokumentov iz arkhiva presidenta respubliki Kazakhstan*. Almaty-Moscow: Gotika, 1997. doc. 7, p. 18.

instruction to youth under the age of 18 was strictly prohibited and that violators would be tried in court.[120] As the 1920s and 30s progressed, restrictions on religious activities would become increasingly more strict in the USSR. It is only during the middle of the Second World War that this trend starts to reverse itself slightly.

Not only the Mennonites, but Baptists and other predominantly German religious denominations also came under increased scrutiny and persecution at this time. In Kyrgyzstan the Soviet authorities particularly worried about Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Mennonites, and Seventh Day Adventists. A report from the Kirov Obkom of the CPSU in the Kyrgyz SSR dated 8 September 1927 notes that ethnic Germans predominated among these groups and that some of them had been actively attempting to convert local Kyrgyz. Also noted with worry were the economic activities of Mennonite and Adventist cooperatives by ethnic Germans in the Talas Valley.[121] The Soviet state viewed the very well organized and prosperous Mennonite cooperatives as a direct threat to its control of the economy.

Not long after reporting on the threat posed by the Mennonites and other "sects" in Kyrgyzstan the Kirov Obkom of the Communist Party took action. On 3 November 1927, the Kirov Obkom passed a resolution entitled, "On Measures for the Liquidation of Mennonite Communes".[122] The Soviet government successfully closed down the "Mennonite Agricultural Society" in 1927.[123] The elimination of the independent cooperatives destroyed much of the independent economic basis for a separate Mennonite social existence. The Soviet government thus greatly eroded the distinctive social and economic character of Mennonite society in the USSR including in Kyrgyzstan.

Not long after the elimination of the Mennonite cooperatives, the Soviet government began a campaign to collectivize agriculture.

120 German et al., doc. 6.4.2, p. 169.
121 German, et al., doc. 6.4.5, pp. 172–174.
122 German, et al., doc. 6.2.5, pp. 159–160.
123 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* p. 98.

This involved the radical transformation of agriculture in the USSR. The Soviet government eliminated most private cultivation of land and replaced it with collective farms. It also involved the mass deportation of farmers branded as "kulaks" to the Far North, Urals, Kazakhstan and Siberia. A new wave of Germans from European areas of the USSR arrived in Kazakhstan involuntarily at this time.

In Kyrgyzstan the collectivization of German households took place between 1930 and 1932. Initially the Soviet government formed the Germans into TOZes (the loosest form of collective farming in the USSR) and only later into fully formed kolkhozes. The forcible elimination of the traditional land tenure system of Germans in Kyrgyzstan entailed less violence than in other regions of the USSR.[124] Nonetheless, the Soviet government successfully destroyed the traditional agrarian way of life of the Germans in Kyrgyzstan. The old economic basis of the German communities ceased to exist and was replaced with a system of collectivized agriculture.

In Kazakhstan like other areas of the USSR there was a movement by Mennonites to emigrate out of the Soviet Union during 1929–1930. The Soviet government took a number of repressive measures to eliminate this movement in Kazakhstan just as it did in Moscow, Siberia, and Ukraine.

In the early 1930s, the forced collectivization of agriculture disproportionately fell upon the Germans in European areas of the USSR. Deportation of "kulaks" to special settlements in remote areas of the USSR became one of the principle tools used by the Soviet regime to collectivize agriculture. There are numerous instances recorded in the Soviet archives even at this early date of Soviet officials singling out ethnic Germans for abuse including the use of racist insults during collectivization.[125] The Stalin regime deported those peasants accused of being "kulaks" to special settlements in order to terrorize reluctant peasants into joining the collective farms. Kazakhstan served as one of the primary destina-

124 German et al., p. 356.
125 GARF F. 3316, O. 64, D. 760, ll. 77–78.

tions for "kulaks" deported from the lower and middle Volga including the Volga German ASSR during 1930–1931.[126] The total number of farmers branded as kulaks to be deported from the Volga German ASSR during this time came to 4,288 families or nearly 25,000 people.[127] Viktor Krieger estimates that the total number of ethnic Germans in the USSR as a whole to be deported to special settlements as "kulaks" from 1928 to 1932 numbered 50,000.[128] A number of these deportees ended up in Kazakhstan.

The forced collectivization of agriculture in the Volga German ASSR and the simultaneous deportation of kulaks took place from September 1929 to late July 1931. During this time the percentage of households in the territory incorporated into kolkhozes increased from 7% to 95%.[129] The initial move to collectivize agriculture in the ASSR in the fall of 1929 progressed fast. By January 1930, the Soviet authorities had successfully collectivized 73,600 peasant households in the territory into kolkhozes. This represented 68% of rural households in the territory. The collectivization with its confiscation of property and repressive measures led to considerable protests including a full scale uprising in the village of Marienfeld. The suppression of the Marienfeld uprising led to more than 60 German farmers being arrested and executed in January 1930. Massive dekulakization in the territory began in February 1930. But, then on 5 March 1930 *Pravda* published Stalin's article, "Dizzy with Success." This article led to a resolution by the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the Struggle against Distortions in the Party Line in the Kolkhoz Movement." This decree allowed farmers to voluntarily leave the collective farms. In the Volga German ASSR the percentage of collectivized rural households fell from 70% to 30%. A new wave of forced collectivization began in July 1930 and by the end of the year another 30,000 households had been herded into kolkohzes in

126 Zemskov 2005, table, 1, p. 17.
127 German et al., p. 351.
128 Viktor Krieger, "Chronologie der antideutschen Massnahmen in Russland bzw. der UdSSR," *Volk auf dem Weg* 8–9, 2007, p. 13.
129 German and Pleve, pp. 39–40.

the territory.[130] The Volga German ASSR had reached 95% collectivization by 20 June 1931.[131] The forced collectivization of agriculture in the Volga region like in other regions in the USSR had devastating effects leading to mass starvation in 1932 and 1933. In the mean time the Germans deported as kulaks to remote areas of the USSR suffered horribly as well from poor material conditions.

The "dekulakization" campaign introduced the term special settler. The OGPU (Unified State Political Administration) confiscated the property of farmers branded as "kulaks" and forcibly resettled the deportees into remote areas of the USSR. Here they had to construct isolated villages using the most primitive of technologies. These villages came under the administration and surveillance of the OGPU and their inhabitants became a source of forced labor to be leased out to lumber trusts and other industries.

Special settlers lived under a system of enumerated restrictions that set them apart from other Soviet citizens. The most important of these legal disabilities was their inability to freely choose their place of residence or to travel without special permission from the OGPU. The deported "kulaks" and later special settlers became an involuntary workforce to develop remote areas of the Soviet Union.

The mass of special settlers deported to Kazakhstan and other areas during the early 1930s lived in conditions of extreme material misery lasting years. During the first years of exile large numbers of them perished from malnutrition, disease, exposure and other causes directly related to the dire poverty they suffered in the special settlement villages. Children were especially prone to succumb due to these conditions. There are no recorded totals for deaths during 1930 and 1931. Oleg Khlevniuk estimates the number of fatalities in these two years to be around 200,000.[132] However, the OGPU began reporting these figures in 1932. For the year 1932, they tabulated 89,754 deaths out of a total population of

130 German and Pleve, p. 39.

131 German and Pleve, p. 40.

132 Oleg Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror,* trans. Vadim Staklo. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004. p. 327.

1,317,022 special settlers (6.8%). In Kazakhstan and Central Asia there were 27,367 deaths out of 191,179 special settlers (14.3%). Most of these deaths took place in northern Kazakhstan where 21,344 out of 139,039 (15.35%) special settlers perished.[133] The next year the mortality rate among special settlers more than doubled. During this year the OGPU recorded 151,601 special settler deaths out of a population of 1,142,084 (13.27%) people. Deaths among special settlers in Kazakhstan and Central Asia numbered 35,699 out of 169,942 (21%). Northern Kazakhstan had an astounding 25,293 special settler deaths out of 102,487 (25%) exiles, a quarter of the population.[134] It is unknown how many of these fatalities were Germans deported from the Volga German ASSR or Ukraine. But, certainly the total number of German fatalities due to these deportations must number in the thousands. The harsh steppe region of northern Kazakhstan had already become a mass grave for deported Germans and would later be for other nationalities such as the Chechens.

The forced collectivization in the Volga German ASSR destroyed many of the most productive households in the territory. The overall production of grain in the republic plummeted from 672,100 tons in 1931 to a mere 251,600 tons in 1932, considerably less than half. Likewise the livestock population of the Volga German ASSR declined radically from 166,100 horses, 352,200 long horned cattle, 245,200 swine, 641,500 sheep and goats in 1929 to 40,000 horses, 123,700 long horned cattle, 51,000 swine, and 113,000 sheep and goats in 1933. The collapse of both grain production and livestock holdings led to mass starvation in the republic. The total number of recorded deaths in the Volga German ASSR increased from 20,152 in 1932 to 50,139 in 1933. Out of this second number a full 45,000 were the result of hunger due to the famine created by collectivization. Tens of thousands of people fled the countryside to cities and construction sites to seek jobs that might provide them with bread. A full agricultural recovery in the Volga German ASSR

133 Zemskov 2005, table 3, pp. 22–23.
134 Zemskov 2005, table 4, pp. 24–25.

really only came about in 1937 although mass starvation had ceased by 1934.[135] The 17 February 1935 kolkhoz statute granting collective farmers the right to kitchen plots to grow potatoes, vegetables, fruits, as well as raise limited amounts of livestock greatly aided in this economic recovery. This private production by individual households accounted for a significant amount of the livestock and more than half of the republic's potatoes, fruits, and vegetables, a portion of which was sold at farmers' markets.[136] This partial re-institution of private agriculture and even private sales of food in state sanctioned markets in 1935 allowed the workers on kolkhozes to feed themselves and to sell a significant amount of fresh food to urban dwellers to subsidize the inadequate state and collective production of food in the USSR.

The famine of 1932–1933 hit Ukraine even harder than it did the Volga region. The famine in Ukraine was so devastating due to three factors. First, the ruthless extraction of grain from the region by the OGPU who searched house to house and ripped up floor boards and dug up backyards looking for hidden grain after they had already taken the seed grain. Second, the OGPU sealing the borders of the Ukrainian SSR off from the RSFSR and and Belorussian SSR to prevent starving peasants from escaping to areas with food. Finally, the regime officially denied that a famine existed and refused to allow foreign assistance of the type that had ameliorated the 1921–1922 famine.[137] Viktor Krieger estimates that the total number of Germans in the USSR to die of hunger related causes during these two years was 100,000 most notably in Ukraine, Volga, and Kazakhstan.[138] This number is only half of the estimate given by German and Kurochkin. They estimate that the famine of 1932–1933 killed 200,000 Germans throughout the USSR including 55,000 in the Volga German ASSR.[139] This sug-

135 German and Pleve, p. 40.
136 German and Pleve, p. 40.
137 Anne Applebaum, *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine.* NY: Anchor Books, 2017, pp. xxviii–xxix.
138 Viktor Krieger, "Anti-German", p. 13.
139 German and Kurochkin, p. 23.

gests a rather large number of fatalities among the German minority in Ukraine. German and Kurochkin do not break down the geographic distribution of the 145,000 German victims of the famine that perished outside the Volga German ASSR.

In the mid-1930s the deportation of national minorities in border cleansing operations further increased the number of Germans living in Kazakhstan. During 1936, the NKVD deported many of the Germans living along the Ukrainian border with Poland to special settlements in northern Kazakhstan.[140] Poles made up the majority of these special settlers, but Germans constituted some 15,000 out of 64,000 of these deportees.[141] The NKVD sent them to 37 new special settlements in Kazakhstan.[142] Here they came under the same legal restrictions earlier imposed upon the deported "kulaks." The 1930s witnessed a sharp increase in the German population in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Between 1926 and 1937 the German population in Kazakhstan grew from 51,102 to 80,568.[143] The mass deportations of 1930–1931 and 1936 without a doubt account for much of this increase.

During 1937 and 1938 the NKVD conducted a series of national operations aimed at removing potential foreign spies from the USSR. These operations included a "Polish Operation", a "German Operation", a "Finnish Operation", a "Latvian Operation", and a "Greek Operation." These operations disproportionately targeted Soviet citizens belonging to diaspora nationalities that had their origins in these foreign states. The "Polish Operation" constituted the largest of these operations. During this operation the NKVD sentenced 111,091 people to death.[144] The "German Operation" netted the second most arrests, convictions and

140 Bugai 1995, pp. 9–11 and Polian, pp. 96–98.

141 V.A. Berdinskikh, *Spetsposelentsy: Politcheskaia ssylka narodov Sovetskoi Rossii.* Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2005, p. 23.

142 Alfred Eisfeld and Viktor Herdt, eds., *Deportation, Sondersiedlung, Arbeitsarmee: Deutsche in der Sowjetunion 1941 bis 1956*, Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1996, doc. 6, pp. 30–31.

143 Krieger *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, table 1, p. 133.

144 James Morris, "The Polish Terror: Spy Mania and Ethnic Cleansing in the Great Terror," *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 56, no. 5 (July 2004), p. 760.

executions. The number of convictions during this operation totaled 55,005 including 41,898 sentenced to be shot. The largest number of those repressed lived in Ukraine. Here the number of convicts reached 21,299 of which 18,005 received the death sentence. The Volga German ASSR, however, had only 1,002 people arrested and sentenced in the "German Operation." Only 567 of these people received the death penalty. This was less than those sentenced in Crimea, 1,625 of which 1,391 were death sentences. The operation focused much more on Ukraine and other areas of scattered German settlement than it did on the main compact settlement of Germans in the Volga. Altai Krai in Siberia had 3,171 sentences of which 2,412 were capital punishment. The "German Operation" extended to Kazakhstan and Central Asia as well. The number of people convicted during this operation in Kazakhstan and Central Asia numbered 2,107. Most of those convicted consisted of Germans in Kazakhstan. The total number of convictions in Kazakhstan reached 1,471 followed by Uzbekistan with 284, Kyrgyzstan with 255, Turkmenistan with 85 and Tajikistan with only 12. The Soviet government sentenced a total of 1,749 of these people to death: 1,410 in Kazakhstan, 158 in Kyrgyzstan, 114 in Uzbekistan, 63 in Turkmenistan, and 4 in Tajikistan. It is not known exactly how many ethnic Germans the NKVD shot during this operation. Partial figures for the "German Operation" show that they comprised two thirds of those sentenced.[145] It is certain, however, that Germans comprised a disproportionate number of those executed in 1937 and 1938 in all of the USSR including Kazakhstan and Central Asia. None of the titular nationalities of the USSR suffered on a per capita basis anywhere near the losses inflicted upon diaspora nationalities like Poles, Germans, Latvians, and Finns. All of these nationalities suffered a disproportionately high rate of arrest and execution during the Great Terror of 1937–1938.

Nicolas Werth provides a more exact analysis of the figures on the total number of convictions of Germans in the USSR during

145 N. Okhotin and A. Roginsky, "Iz istorii 'nemetskoi operatsii' NKVD 1937–1938 gg." In *Nakazannyi narod: Repressii protiv rossiiskikh nemtsev,* edited by I.L Shcherbakova. Moscow. Zven'ia, 1999, pp. 64–66.

1937–1938 and their division between executions and those sent to labor camps. He gives a total figure of 72,000 Germans arrested and convicted during the Great Terror or 5% of their total population in the USSR. Out of this number the German Operation, NKVD Order no. 00439 accounted for 38,000 people.[146] Presumably the NKVD arrested and sentenced most of the remaining 34,000 Germans during the "Kulak" Operation or NKVD Order no. 00447. Okhotin and Roginsky estimate the total number of Germans convicted under this operation at 20,000–22,000.[147] The "Kulak Operation" claimed more victims than the "German Operation" in the Volga German ASSR. The number sentenced to death in the territory under this still class based operation was 3,027 more than three times that in the "German Operation." The NKVD sent another 2,603 people from the Volga German ASSR to camps in the "Kulak Operation" during 1937–1938.[148] Given the known percentages of executions from various operations it appears that the NKVD shot 29,000 Germans during the German Operation and sent 9,000 to labor camps.[149] Germans shot in the "Kulak" Operation would amount to 17,000 and another 17,000 sent to labor camps.[150] In total this amounts to 46,000 ethnic Germans shot and 26,000 sent to corrective labor camps by the NKVD during 1937–1938. In comparison the Polish Operation arrested 98,000 ethnic Poles of which the NKVD shot 78,000 and sent 20,000 to labor camps. The remaining 22,000 sentenced Poles during the Great Terror were divided between 11,000 executed and 11,000 labor camp sentences for a total of 89,000 death sentences and 31,000 incarcerated.[151] The German Operation thus was the second largest national operation in total numbers after the Polish Operation.

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146 Nicolas Werth, "The Mechanism of a Mass Crime: The Great Terror in the Soviet Union, 1937–1938" in Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 237.

147 Okohtin and Roginsky, p. 71.

148 Okohotin and Roginsky, p. 67.

149 Werth in Gellately and Kiernan, p. 232.

150 Werth in Gellately and Kiernan, p. 233

151 Werth in Gellately and Kiernan, pp. 232–237.

The Soviet government also dismantled the German language schools in Kazakhstan and Central Asia in 1938. During this year the Soviet government eliminated German as the language of instruction in all schools outside the Volga German ASSR. This elimination took place as part of the liquidation of all national districts and national village soviets. In Kazakhstan the schools in former German village soviets replaced German with Russian or Kazakh as the language of instruction in 1938.[152] The Soviet government eliminated the cultural rights of diaspora nationalities starting in 1937–1938 and continuing up to the eve of Stalin's death.

During the national operations of the Great Terror, the Stalin regime made nationality an ascriptive and immutable category. Many Germans, Poles, Greeks and others sought to avoid persecution during this time by changing or hiding their nationality. To prevent diapsora nationalities from altering or hiding their ethnic origins the NKVD racialized the category of nationality. On 2 April 1938, the NKVD issued Circular number 65 that henceforth individuals would not be able to choose their nationality as identified on line five in their passports. Instead all individuals now automatically inherited the nationality category of their parents. The circular explicitly noted that the children of people listed as German, Polish, Greek, etc. by nationality could not be registered as other nationalities such as Russian regardless of level of acculturation or assimilation. Soviet authorities now required documentation proving a person's nationality as determined by ancestry before issuing or renewing passports and other official documents.[153] This circular fundamentally altered *natsional'nost'* in the Soviet Union from an ethnic category into a racial category.

The last Soviet census before the 1941 deportations took place in 1939. As discussed below it over counts the total German population, particularly in the Volga German ASSR as a way of

152 Karpykova, p. 5.

153 Nikita Petrov and Arsenii Roginskii, "The 'Polish Operation' of the NKVD, 1937–8" in Barry McLoughlin, and Kevin McDermott, eds., *Stalin's Terror: High Politics and Mass Repression in the Soviet Union*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 167.

covering up for famine deaths in 1932–1933. But, the 1939 numbers are not far off from the actual population in 1941 on the eve of the deportations. The 1939 census gives a total population of 1,427,232 on 17 January 1939. Most of these, 862,504 lived in the RSFSR with the Volga German ASSR accounting for 366,685 people. Ukraine had even more Germans than the Volga German ASSR with 392,458 people. The largest German populations in Ukraine were Odessa Oblast with 91,462, Zaporozhia Oblast with 89,389, and 47,154 in Stalin Oblast. The next largest concentrations of Germans in the USSR were Crimea with 51,299 Germans, Ordzhonikidze Krai with 45,689, and Krasnodar Krai with 34,287. In the Transcaucasus there were 20,527 Germans in Georgia and 23,133 in Azerbaijan.[154] The ethnic Germans were a sizable minority in much of the region surrounding the Black Sea as well as the majority of the Volga German ASSR.

The Volga German ASSR had reached a fairly high level of development by 1939 compared to its starting point as the Volga German Worker's Commune in 1918. During the 1920s and 1930s the Soviet government sought to create a socialist state with collectivized agriculture, state owned industry, and a social-cultural infrastructure promoting the development of a German ethnic state within the USSR. The territory was 28,400 square kilometers or about the size of Belgium. The official census counted 606,500 people. But, the 1939 census had been tampered with to reduce the losses caused by the 1932–1933 famine. One way this was done was to add extra people to certain territories. The Volga German ASSR was one of these territories and the real population was only 565,700 people. The majority of the population consisted of rural Germans with Russians forming the largest minority followed by Ukrainians.[155] The total number of ethnic Germans in the territory was 366,685 people.[156] The capital city of Engels had nearly 70,000

154 O.L. Milova, ed., *Deportatsii narodov SSSR (1930–1950-e gody), Chast' 2. Deportatsiia nemtsev (Sentiabr' 1941–Fevral' 1942 gg.)*. Moscow: RAN, 1995. pp. 21–23.

155 German 2000, p. 247.

156 Milova, vol. II, doc. No. 2, p. 22.

inhabitants, but only 12% were German.[157] In 1940 the Volga German ASSR had a record crop 1,186,900 tons of grain. This was considerably greater than the 1939 harvest of 292,000 tons and way above the nadir of 1924 with only 14,200 tons.[158] The republic had 18 large industrial factories on its territory in 1939. The largest in terms of employees was the spinning mill named after Samoilov in the city of Red Textile Worker. It had 1,904 workers in 1939. In terms of value of output, however, the Liebknecht Textile factory in Balzar produced almost three times as much with 1,377 employees.[159] In 1939 the Volga German ASSR had 221 doctors and 62 hospitals among other medical facilities.[160] Its educational infrastructure consisted of 191 grammar schools, 192 incomplete middle schools, and 63 complete middle schools with a total of 117,160 pupils and 4,326 teachers.[161] It also had a pedagogical institute with 603 students and 85 instructors, an agricultural institute with 231 students and 43 instructors, and 15 other higher education facilities.[162] Finally, the ASSR had five theaters, 406 libraries with 1,041,000 books total, and 252 kolkhoz clubs among other cultural institutions.[163] On the eve of its annihilation by the NKVD the Volga German ASSR had greatly advanced economically and socially from the destruction caused by the Civil War from 1918–1921.

By 1939, the German population in Kazakhstan and Central Asia exceeded 115,000 out of a little over 1.4 million in the USSR. Thus the region contained a little over 8% of the German population of the Soviet Union. The population had undergone significant growth, much of it due to forced migration, since 1926. The first Soviet census had only recorded 61,000 Germans in the region. The percentage of Germans living in Kazakhstan and Central Asia had thus increased from 5% to 8.2%. The Germans still lived primarily in the Volga and Black Sea regions at this time. As

157 German 2000, pp. 248–249.
158 German 2000, p. 251.
159 German 2000, p. 250.
160 German 2000, p. 252.
161 German 2000, p. 253.
162 German 2000, p. 254.
163 German 2000, p. 255.

a result of the mass deportations at the start of World War II, Kazakhstan and Central Asia would eventually become the largest area of settlement for Russian Germans.

**Table 4: German Population in Kazakhstan and Central Asia Prior to World War II.[164]**

| Year | USSR | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan | Tajikistan | Turkmen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1926 | 1,238,549 | 51,102 | 4,291 | 4,646[165] | ------ | 1,276 |
| 1937 | 1,151,602 | 80,568 | ------- | ------- | ------ | ------- |
| 1939 | 1,427,232 | 92,571 | 11,741 | 10,049 | 2,022 | 3,346 |

164 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* table 1, p. 133.

165 This figure includes Germans living in the Tajik ASSR. At this time Tajikistan was part of the Uzbek SSR and did not constitute a separate union republic.

# 6 The Deportation

The first mass forced removal of ethnic Germans from their homelands in European areas of the USSR to areas further east during World War II took place in Crimea not the Volga. The eviction of the Germans from Crimea was framed as an "evacuation" rather than a deportation. The NKVD under Karanadze rounded up the Crimean Germans and shipped them temporarily to Ordzhonikidze Krai (Stavropol') and Rostov Oblast on the basis of Resolution of the Council on Evacuation No. SE-75s of 15 August 1941. This first step in the ethnic cleansing of the ethnic Germans from western regions of the USSR involved close to 60,000 people. Most of these people, about 50,000 ended up temporarily in Ordzhonikidze Krai before being deported eastward to Kazakhstan in October 1941. The NKVD sent another 3,000 to Rostov Oblast. It is not clear what happened to the other 7,000 Crimean Germans referred to in the two reports by Deputy Chief of the Section on Special Settlements NKVD USSR, Captain of State Security Konradov.[166] The statistical data on deportations contained in the Soviet archives is often incomplete, contradictory, and contains numerous arithmetic errors. The Crimean Germans were both the first Russian German subgroup to be deported in World War II and the first ethnic group cleansed from the peninsula before the Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians, and Bulgarians in 1944.

> Secret
> Information
>
> From the Crimean ASSR, as reported in a communication on 2.IX-41 with the Peoples Commissar of Internal Affairs for the Crimean ASSR com. Karanadze, were evacuated to Ordzhonikidze Krai in accordance with the Resolution of the council on evacuation No. SE-75s of 15 VIII-41 close to 60 thousand people of German nationality.
>
> According to a report from the UNKVD of Ordzhonikidze Krai (com. Shapiro) [I have redacted a long list of raions in Ordzhonikidze krai here]

166 GARF F. R 9479, O. 1, D. 86, ll. 122–123.

> from the Crimean ASSR have arrived 50 thousand citizens of German nationality.
>
> In addition to these people another 3 thousand people of German nationality from the Crimean ASSR arrived in Rostov Oblast in connection to conducting the operation to resettle them from Rostov Oblast to the Kazakh SSR.
>
> Dep. Chief of the Section for Special Settlements
> NKVD USSR
> Captain of State Security Konradov
>
> 11 September 1941[167]

The forced removal of the Germans living in the Crimea highlighted the chaos and lack of proper preparations regarding the well being of the evacuees that characterized all such Soviet operations. The NKVD only allowed the Crimean Germans to bring 50 kg of baggage each with them on the evacuation trains. Unlike the later deportees they received no receipts for property abandoned in Crimea.[168] As a result the Crimean Germans received no grain later in Kazakhstan in exchange for grain left behind in their old kolkhozes. Initially, however, the NKVD only sent the Crimean Germans a short distance to kolkhozes in Ordzhonikidze Krai and Rostov Oblast. Despite the short distance, many Crimean Germans failed to pack enough food for the journey and ran out after only two to three days.[169] In their new areas of settlement the Crimean Germans helped with the fall harvest before being deported to Kazakhstan in October along with the rest of the German population living in these territories.

The NKVD failed to remove all of the Germans from Crimea in August 1941. Thousands still remained after the initial ethnic cleansing. The Front Council ordered the NKVD to deport another 2,233 Germans from Crimea directly to Kazakhstan and Omsk in

167 GARF F. R 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 123.
168 Milova vol. II, doc. 62, pp. 231–236.
169 N.F. Bugai, ed., *Deportatsiia narodov Kryma: Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii*. Moscow: INSAN, 2002, doc. 47, pp. 78–79.

October 1941.[170] A small number of Germans remained in Crimea after the forced evacuation in 1941 and the end of the Nazi occupation in May 1944 as attested to in later archival documentation regarding the population of the peninsula. A report to Stalin from NKVD Chief Beria on 4 July 1944 noted that a total of 225,009 people had recently been evicted from Crimea of which 1,119 were Germans that had avoided removal in 1941. A number that still fails to fully account for the missing 7,000 Germans in the initial documentation. In addition to mopping up the remaining Germans in Crimea the NKVD had also deported 183,155 Crimean Tatars, 12,422 Bulgarians, 15,040 Greeks, 9,621 Armenians, all of which had Soviet citizenship plus 3,652 foreign passport holders. The Germans along with the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians were sent mostly to the Urals and Gur'ev Oblast in Kazakhstan. Most of the Crimean Tatars in contrast, 151,604 were deported to Uzbekistan as were the foreign passport holders.[171] By the time of the Yalta Conference in August 1944 the Soviet NKVD had physically purged the Crimean peninsula of all the surviving national groups except the Russians and Ukrainians. The Nazis had earlier exterminated the Jewish and Gypsy populations.

The largest group of Germans deported in 1941 to Siberia and Kazakhstan came from the Volga region. This included not only the Volga German ASSR, but also Saratov and Stalingrad oblasts. It is still not known exactly when the Soviet government decided to deport the Volga Germans. But, there was a count made of both the number of Germans in Saratov Oblast and the Volga German ASSR in June 1941. The number of Germans on 1 June 1941 in Saratov Oblast was 54,389.[172] The number counted in the Volga German ASSR was 401,746.[173] The decision appears to have come quite suddenly. Evidence of contingency plans drawn up before the war to deport the Volga Germans is very sparse and no supporting archival documents have been unearthed. There is

170 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 268.
171 GARF F. R-9401, O. 2, D. 65, l. 275.
172 Milova, vol. II, doc. No. 3, pp. 23–25.
173 Milova, vol. II, doc. No. 3, pp. 25–26.

quite a bit of speculation that the Stalin regime reached its decision sometime in July or early August. But, there are no surviving records or other hard evidence before late August 1941.[174] Exactly when and how the Soviet leadership decided to deport the Volga Germans still remains murky. The earliest archival document on the planning of the deportation of the Volga Germans comes from 25 August 1941. This is a letter by the head of the NKVD, Beria to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) with the designation No. 2514/B. It refers to a draft of a deportation order to deport the Volga Germans. I have reproduced an English translation of the document below.

> 25 August 1941
>
> This is in connection to your orders as presented in the draft of the resolution of the SNK and CC CPSU (B) on the orderly resettlement from the Volga German Republic, Saratov, and Stalingrad oblasts.
>
> The total local population subject to exile is 479,841 people, of this number from the Volga German Republic—401,746 people, from Saratov Oblast—54,389 people, from Stalingrad Oblast 23,756 people.
>
> Resettlement is to take place in the north-eastern oblasts of the Kazakh SSR, Krasnoiarsk and Altai Krais, Omsk and Novosibirsk oblasts.
>
> Attached is the accompanying draft resolution for the first secretaries of the obkoms of the CPSU (B): Saratov—tov. Vlaslov, Stalingrad—tov. Chuianov, Volga German Republic—tov. Malov to familiarize themselves with.
>
> Awaiting your orders,
> People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs for the Union of SSRs
> Beria[175]

The final draft of the decree ordering the deportation of the Volga Germans came the next day on 26 August 1941. The SNK and the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) passed in secret a resolution ordering the "Resettlement of all Germans from

174 German 2004, pp. 351–352.

175 N.L. Pobol and P.M. Polian, eds., *Stalinskie deportatsii 1928–1953: Dokumenty.* Moscow: MFD, Materik, 2005, doc. 3.1, p. 287.

the republic of the Volga Germans and the oblasts of Saratov and Stalingrad to the following krais and oblasts:"[176] The use of the word "all" here is crucial and will be used in all subsequent deportation orders regarding ethnic Germans from specific territories in the USSR. It will also be used in the later deportation orders for the Kalmyks, Karachais, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, and Meskhetian Turks. The Volga German deportation order then lists two krais and two oblasts in Siberia and six oblasts in Kazakhstan and the number of Germans to be resettled in each. In total the number of Germans in the Volga region initially estimated to be subject to internal deportation added up to 433,000 people. This number was divided between 333,000 to Siberia and 100,000 to Kazakhstan.[177] This was more than double the total of the 1937 internal deportation of the ethnic Koreans from the Russian Far East to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This earlier deportation involved 172,597 people.[178] The deportation of the Volga Germans thus represented one of the largest cases of ethnic cleansing during the 20th Century at the time it took place. When combined with the internal deportation of other ethnic Germans in the USSR it rivaled in size the forced relocation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during World War One.

The resolution of the SNK and CC CPSU of 26 August 1941 is fairly detailed and contains instructions on how to carry out the deportations from the Volga region. This resolution served as a template for the later deportation of Germans throughout other regions of the USSR and later other nationalities in the North Caucasus and Crimea. Responsibility for the resettlement of the Volga Germans was assigned to the NKVD. Most of the decree is devoted to allocating various financial responsibilities to various Soviet People's Commissariats. The decree contained a number of initial plans that could not be fulfilled. Among these plans was the third point to settle the Volga German as whole kolkhozes rather than split them up among already inhabited collective farms as

176 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 1.
177 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 1.
178 V.D. Kim, ed., *Pravda – Polveka spustia.* Tashkent: Ozbekiston, 1999, pp. 76–77.

actually happened. The fourth point of settling urban dwellers in district centers and other cities was also largely violated.[179] A great number of the urban dwellers from cities like Engels in the Volga German ASSR ended up on kolkhozes in Krasnoiarsk Krai. The decree allowed the deportees to bring with them up to one ton of personal property per family including small farm implements, household goods, and produce. They had to abandon buildings, agricultural equipment, livestock, and grain. A commission was to issue receipts for this remaining property to be redeemed with the exception of horses to kolkhozes, kolkhoz workers, and individual farmers in the new areas of settlement. Buildings were to be reimbursed in the places of new settlement in the form of either prepared homes or construction materials.[180] The reimbursement of lost property, especially grain and livestock, also was delayed and incomplete in Siberia and Kazakhstan. The NKVD often failed to abide by many of the provisions for the welfare of the Volga German deportees mentioned in this order. Indeed the central Soviet authorities must have been aware that in the middle of severe wartime shortages that the local authorities in the places of exile lacked the resources to provide sufficient housing and food for the incoming Volga Germans to ensure that they all survived. In this sense the deportations mirrored the Ottoman forcible resettlement of the Armenians during World War One. There too the central government had issued resolutions calling for the provision of adequate supplies for the deportees and yet the execution of these deportation orders led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Armenians due to a lack of food, water, and other necessities.[181] While there is controversy over the Armenian Genocide, few serious scholars doubt that it was indeed a case of genocide despite the existence of provisions in the deportation orders to secure the welfare of the deportees. Likewise the existence of similar provisions in the Soviet deportation order

179 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 2.

180 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 2.

181 Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*. London: Arnold, 2001, pp. 110–111.

for the Volga Germans does not absolve the Stalin regime from the crime of genocide. The resettlement of the Volga Germans themselves was to take place between 3 and 20 September 1941.[182] The deportation was to be done mostly by rail with some transported by water through Gur'ev. The NKPS under Lazar Kaganovich was responsible for the rail transportation of the deportees from the Volga region to points east.[183] It should be noted that while the forced deportation of civilian populations to alien territories was later decreed a crime against humanity at the Nuremberg Trials Kaganovich lived out his life without ever facing justice for his crimes until 1991 when he died peacefully at the age of 97 in Moscow.

Attached to the actual decree are six pages of instructions. The first four points on page one reiterate parts of the first part of the document. The fifth point sets up operative groups consisting of the NKVD and militia.[184] The operative groups were to be ready by 30 August 1941. The deportation was to proceed according to lists of Germans in each district. Members of German families that were themselves not German by nationality were not subject to deportation, but could voluntarily accompany their families into internal exile. In cases where sections of a family subject to deportation were not present to be resettled they were to be deported upon their return. Family members of men serving in the Red Army were also to be resettled on the same basis as all other Volga Germans.[185] While German members of the Red Army and their families were to be deported or mobilized into the labor army the question of what to do with the much smaller number of Germans working in the NKVD was not so straight forward. Point 11 in the instructions leaves the question of their fate up to the NKVD. The deportees were allowed to bring one ton of personal property per family with them into exile. This included food, bedding, kitchen utensils, china, and tools. Rural dwellers

182 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 5.
183 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 6.
184 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 7.
185 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 8.

were to receive compensation for buildings, agricultural equipment, livestock except horses, and grain in their new places of residence.[186] Chief of the operative groups of the NKVD and districts were to compose clear plans for moving the deportees to the areas where the trains were loaded. The movement of women, children, and property to the trains was to do be done by kolkhoz owned cars and horses. All the personal property of the deportees was to be taken to baggage wagons and marked. A person from among the resettlers was to be given special authority to receive and issue this baggage. Lists of those to be resettled were to be composed by the head of the NKVD operative groups of the district in three copies. One to be given to the head of the echelon, one to the executive of the local Soviet, and one to a representative of the NKVD. The chief of the NKVD or UNKVD was to designate from among the operative group the chief of the echelon and his deputy. In addition each echelon was to have 22 armed convey guards from the internal troops of the NKVD. At the loading points workers for the transportation organs of the NKVD were to load the deportees and their property onto the train echelons in accordance with the established schedule. Deportees were to bring twenty days worth of food with them to last them through the journey to their new destinations. Additional food was to be provided to the deportees on the trip at specially established buffets. Hot food was to be issued once a day and boiling water twice a day without charge. All payments for this food was to paid by the chief of the echelon. The NKVD-UNKVD was to give to the chief of the echelon an advance to pay for this food and other expenses such as telegraphs. Each echelon was to have a doctor, two nurses, and a medical wagon provided by the People's Commissariat of Health. The chief of the echelon of the deportees was to be provided special instructions on moving the contingent.[187] For deportees destined for urban areas they were to carefully establish the addresses, compose a district level plan and schedule, form

186 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 9.
187 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 11.

sealed compartments for the deportees, and also give their remaining property to the authority of the building administrator. Finally, those in charge of the echelons were to provide information cards on the deportees for the recount of the resettlers by authorities in the oblast centers in their places of arrival. This was to enable them to count and administer the deportees.[188] Much of this part of the document would be reproduced the following day in the NKVD prikaz issued by Beria regarding instructions on deporting the Volga Germans.

**Table 5: Initial Plan for Distribution of Deported Volga Germans[189]**

| Name of Destination | Number of Germans |
|---|---|
| Krasnoiarsk Krai | 70,000 |
| Altai Krai | 91,000 |
| Omsk Oblast | 80,000 |
| Novosibirsk Oblast | 92,000 |
| Semipalatinsk Oblast, Kazakh SSR | 10,000 |
| Akmolinsk Oblast, Kazakh SSR | 20,000 |
| North Kazakhstan Oblast, Kazakh SSR | 20,000 |
| Kustanai Oblast, Kazakh SSR | 16,000 |
| Pavlodar Oblast, Kazakh SSR | 18,000 |
| East Kazakhstan Oblast, Kazakh SSR | 16,000 |
| Sub Total Kazakhstan | 100,000 |
| Total | 433,000 |

At its end this document has a seven page plan detailing the numbers of Germans to be deported and the NKVD and militia personnel to be involved in the deportation. The first page of the plan lists the planned number of Germans to be deported from the Volga region to Siberia and Kazakhstan. The first part is the number to be deported from various parts of the Volga. This section notes that 401,746 Germans were to be resettled from the city of Engles and 23 districts in the Volga German ASSR, 23,730 from the cities of Stalingrad and Astrakhan and 66 districts of Stalingrad Oblast, and 54,389 from the city of Saratov and 51 districts of Sa-

188 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 11a.
189 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 1.

ratov Oblast.[190] It then provided a list of destinations with different numbers than the ones given on the first page of the decree.

**Table 6: Planned Destinations of German Deportees from the Volga Region[191]**

| Region | Number of Deportees | Number of Districts |
|---|---|---|
| Krasnoiarsk Krai | 75,000 | 40 |
| Novosibirsk Oblast | 100,000 | 45 |
| Omsk Oblast | 85,000 | 57 |
| Akmola Oblast Kazakh SSR | 25,000 | ---- |
| Kustannai Oblast Kazakh SSR | 20,000 | ---- |
| Pavlodar Oblast Kazakh SSR | 20,000 | ---- |
| East Kazakhstan Oblast | 17,000 | ---- |
| North Kazakhstan Oblast | 25,000 | ---- |
| Total Kazakh SSR | 107,000 | ---- |
| Total | 370,000 | ---- |

The next page of the document detailed the number of NKVD and militia personnel allocated to the operation. The leader of the operation was Deputy Head of the NKVD, Serov. Under him were to be 1,550 NKVD operative workers, 3,250 workers of the militia (regular police), and 12,150 Red Army soldiers placed under NKVD command.[192] These men were to be mostly concentrated in the Volga German ASSR.

**Table 7: Personnel Involved in the Deportation of the Volga Germans[193]**

| Territory | NKVD | Militia | Red Army |
|---|---|---|---|
| Volga German ASSR | 1,200 | 2,000 | 7,350 |
| Stalingrad Oblast | 100 | 250 | 2,500 |
| Saratov Oblast | 250 | 1,000 | 2,200 |

The deportation was to use 198 train echelons with each echelon having 68 wagons and each wagon carrying 40 people. The total number of train wagons scheduled for the deportation of the

190 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 12.
191 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, ll. 12–13.
192 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 13.
193 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 13.

Volga Germans was 12,875. The 24,700 deportees from Stalingrad Oblast were to make the first part of their trip into exile by riverboat from Stalingrad to Astrakhan and then across the Caspian also by boat to Gur'ev and then by the Orenburg Railroad to their final destinations. The 22 guards assigned to each echelon were to come from the Red Army and be commanded by an officer from the NKVD Internal Troops.[194] Six rubles a day per person was to be allocated for the provision of hot food once a day. At the stations of arrival were to be organized district troikas consisting of representatives of the NKVD, District Communist Party, and District Soviet executive. They were to arrange for the employment and housing of the deportees. This included the provision of free housing or construction materials to build homes.[195] The final point of the plan maintained the 3–20 September 1941 schedule for the deportation.[196] Again the NKVD failed to implement many of the provisions for the well being of the deportees leaving them without sufficient food, medicine, or housing.

On the final page of the document is an order of battle for the units involved in the deportation of the Volga Germans. The chief of the military groups were Kombrigidier Krivenko in Engles, Colonel Vorobeikov in Saratov, and Kombrigidier Skadkevich in Stalingrad under the over all authority of General Major Achkasov of the NKVD Internal Troops.[197]

194 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 14.
195 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 15.
196 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 16.
197 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 17.

**Table 8: Order of Battle for Deportation of Volga Germans[198]**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| City of Engles | 32 Regiment Operative Troops | 1,500 |
| | 174 Sec. Batalion Operative | 400 |
| | 175 Sec. Batalion Operative | 500 |
| | Reserve Group of Troops | 1,050 |
| | 226 Regiment Convey Troops | 1,500 |
| | 240 Regiment Convey Troops | 1,500 |
| | 60 Regiment of Internal Troops | 600 |
| | Batalion from 29 Brigade Internal Troops | 500 |
| | Total | 7,550 |
| City of Saratov | Military Cadets | 1,300 |
| | 238 Regiment Convey Troops | 1,000 |
| City Stalingrad | 33 Regiment Operative Troops | 1,500 |
| | 230 Regiment Convey Troops | 1,000 |
| | Total | 12,350 |

The following day on 27 August 1941, the head of the NKVD, Lavrentry Beria, issued NKVD Prikaz No. 001158 "On measures for undertaking the operation to resettle Germans from the Volga German Republic and Saratov and Stalingrad oblasts." This decree assigned a total of 1,550 NKVD agents, 3,250 members of the regular police (militia), and 12,150 Red Army soldiers to the task of forcibly deporting the Volga Germans. They had orders to use violent force to make sure the deportation proceeded smoothly. These orders included arresting all anti-Soviet elements found during the operation. In the event of a violation of the law by one of the deportees then the head of their family would be subject to criminal prosecution and the remaining family members repressed. The NKVD also had orders to arrest and convoy under guard those who refused to go willingly to the train stations. Finally, they had standing orders to use decisive measures to liquidate any unrest, anti-Soviet outbreaks, or armed clashes.[199] These orders suggest that the NKVD expected to encounter resistance from the Volga Germans to the deportations. Historically the Volga Germans had violently resisted both the forced confiscation of

198 GARF F. 9479, O. 124, D. 85, l. 17.

199 Nicolas Werth, ed., *Massovye repressii v SSSR:* vol. I of *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: Konets 1920-kh – pervaia polvina 1950-kh godov,* Moscow: Rosspen, 2004, doc. 134, pp. 455–457.

grain during the Civil War and the later collectivization of agriculture. However, by the time of the deportations the attrition of earlier waves of repression had largely pacified the Volga Germans. The NKVD encountered little overt resistance during the deportations.

The same day Beria issued a set of detailed instructions to the NKVD for carrying out the deportation of the Volga Germans. The instructions specifically required the NKVD to carry out the deportation of all ethnic Germans living in the Volga German ASSR, Saratov Oblast, and Stalingrad Oblast including all members of the Communist Party and Komsomol to Siberia and Kazakhstan. Family members of Red Army soldiers fighting against the Nazis at the front also received no exemptions from deportation.[200] The only exception made in these instructions regarding the universal deportation of the Volga Germans was in the case of German women married to non-German men.[201] The German wives of Russians, Ukrainians and others were treated as if they shared their husband's nationality. German men married to Russian women on the other hand received no such consideration. Their wives could either accompany them into exile or divorce them and remain in the Volga region.

The NKVD instructions called for the formation of operative troikas from the head of the NKVD, militia, and Communist Party in each raion. These troikas were to organize into operative groups composed of the NKVD and other personnel engaged in the actual deportation. The operative groups formed by the troikas were to compile lists of those to be deported by going out to all the kolkhozes, villages, and towns with German inhabitants and fill out registration forms of each family subject to deportation. These forms listed the names of all those to be loaded onto train echelons and deported. At the same time the NKVD was to warn the head of each family that he was responsible for ensuring the resettlement of all members of his family. After completing the

200 Milova vol. II, doc. 13, p. 74.
201 Milova vol. II, doc. 13, p. 76,

registration of all Volga Germans the troikas were to come up with plans for undertaking the deportation of the Germans in their districts. Among other details these plans included the number of families and people to be deported, the route of automobile transportation to the train stations, and the distribution of the operative staff involved in the deportations. These raion plans then needed to be approved by the oblast troika.[202] This preparatory work allowed the NKVD to effectively round up and load nearly the entire Volga German population of over 400,000 people onto deportation trains within less than three weeks.

The instructions then deal with the conduct of the actual operation. The deportees were to be given a set time to pack up to one ton of possessions per a family. The NKVD was to instruct the deportees that this amount should include at least one month's supply of food. The remainder of their property had to be turned over to representatives of the Soviet government in exchange for vouchers to be redeemed in their new areas of settlement. There was no restriction on the amount of money they could bring. Urban dwellers could even appoint somebody to sell their property and send them the money in their new settlements.[203] Of course there was also no money based market for food or other items in Kazakhstan and Siberia during WWII. So this particular right did almost nothing to benefit the deportees. In reality they remained restricted to one ton of property including food per a family at most. The supplies they brought with them into exile had to last more than two months.

The resolution on the deportation of the Volga Germans issued by the SNK and Central Committee of the CPSU did not see publication during the existence of the USSR. The document remained classified and in the archives during this time. It first appeared in print in a document collection compiled by A.A. German in 1996. The public announcement of the deportation of the Volga Germans took place in the form of a decree by the Presidi-

202 Milova, Vol. II, doc. 13, pp. 75–76.
203 Milova, Vol. II, doc. 13, pp. 76–77.

um of the Supreme Soviet issued on 28 August 1941. The Soviet government published this decree in two Volga German ASSR newspapers on 30 August 1941. The decree appeared in the Russian language *Bolshevik* and the German language *Nachrichten* newspapers. This decree publicly accused the Volga Germans of being a fifth column awaiting orders from Nazi Germany to attack the USSR deep behind the front lines.

The 28 August 1941 decree by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet unlike the SNK and CC CPSU resolution two days earlier spent a lot of time libeling the Volga Germans as being disloyal to the USSR. It claimed there were tens of thousands of ethnic German saboteurs in the Volga region awaiting orders from the Nazi leadership to conduct diversionary operations by setting off explosives. The Soviet government never provided any evidence to back up these allegations. Furthermore no German documents regarding plans to use ethnic Germans in the USSR for such activities have been unearthed in German archives despite over 70 years of searching.

> Ukaz of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Union SSR
> **On resettling Germans, living in the region of the Volga**
>
> According to reliable reports received from military authorities among the German population living in the region of the Volga exist thousands and tens of thousands of saboteurs and spies who are now awaiting a signal from Germany that they set off explosions in the region settled by Volga Germans.
>
> On the presence of this large number of saboteurs and spies among the Germans, living in the region of the Volga, nobody informed the Soviet authorities, therefore the German population of the region of the Volga concealed amongst themselves enemies of the Soviet people and Soviet authorities.
>
> In the case that acts of sabotage are conducted, according to orders from Germany by German saboteurs and spies in the Volga German Republic or its adjoining regions, bringing about bloodshed, the Soviet leadership would according to the laws of wartime be required to bring punitive measures against the entire German population of the Volga.
>
> In order to avoid this undesirable occurrence and to prevent serious bloodshed the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet deemed it necessary to resettle all the German population, living in the region of the Volga, to other

regions, with the provision that the resettled will be allotted land and rendered state assistance for settling in their new regions.

Those to be resettled are to be assigned to areas of abundant arable land in the regions of Novosibirsk and Omsk oblasts, Altai Krai, Kazakhstan and other neighboring localities.

In connection with this the State Defense Committee is directed to quickly undertake the resettlement of all Volga Germans and allot those resettled Volga Germans agricultural land in their new regions.

CHAIRMAN PRESIDIUM
SUPREME SOVIET USSR M. KALININ

SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDIUM
SUPREME SOVIET USSR A. GORKIN

Moscow, Kremlin
28 august 1941[204]

The security organs completed the near total removal of ethnic Germans in the Volga region where they had resided for 177 years during the first three weeks of September 1941. The NKVD completed the deportation of the titular nationality of the Volga German ASSR on 20 September 1941. They loaded 438,280 Germans from the territory on trains bound for Novosibirsk Oblast, Omsk Oblast, Krasnoiarsk Krai, Altai Krai, and Kazakhstan. The deportation of 26,245 Germans from Stalingrad Oblast to the same eastern regions of the USSR had already been completed by 12 September 1941, eight days earlier. Finally, the NKVD deported 46,706 Volga Germans from Saratov Oblast to Siberia and Kazakhstan.[205] The Stalin regime forcibly uprooted over half a million people (511,231) from the areas of their ancestral homeland and violently dispersed them across the vast space of Siberia and Kazakhstan.

Between 3 and 20 September 1941, the NKVD rounded up the Volga Germans and forced them into box cars. This massive

204 RGASPI (Russian State Archives of Socio-Political History) F. 17, O. 3, D. 1042, l. 112.
205 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 39.

deportation operation physically eliminated the German presence along the Volga and transferred the survivors to Kazakhstan and Siberia. It represented the dissolution of the largest concentration of German culture in Russia. In less than a month the Stalin regime violently ended the life of these communities after over a century and a half of existence.

The trip from the Volga region and then later from other regions of the USSR to Siberia and Kazakhstan was extremely difficult and took on average several weeks. By 23 September 1941 out of 498,048 Germans deported on 207 echelons bound east, a total of 70 echelons with 168,620 deportees had arrived in Siberia and Kazakhstan.[206] This massive forced relocation cleared the entire Volga region of its long settled German population.

**Table 9: Progress of Arrival of Resettled Volga Germans 23 September 1941[207]**

| Destination | Planned Number | Planned Families | Arrivals | Number Echelons |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Altai Krai | 95,000 | 27,200 | 38,485 | 16 |
| Krasnoiarsk Krai | 75,000 | 21,500 | 32,957 | 14 |
| Omsk Oblast | 85,000 | 24,300 | 34,468 | 18 |
| Novosibirsk Obl. | 100,000 | 28,600 | 11,704 | 5 |
| Akmola Oblast | 25,000 | 7,200 | 9,409 | 4 |
| East Kazakhstan | 17,000 | 4,900 | | 4 |
| Kustanai Oblast | 26,000 | 5,700 | 18,378 | 8 |
| Pavlodar Oblast | 20,000 | 5,700 | 14,232 | 6 |
| Semipalatinsk Obl | 18,000 | 5,200 | 2,039 | |
| North Kazakhstan | 25,000 | 7,200 | 6,975 | 3 |
| Total | 480,000 | 138,500 | 168,620 | 70 |

Serov the head of the operation issued a report to Beria from the Volga German ASSR on the day of the deportation decree's publication. The focus of this report is the public reaction which he gauges in a very unscientific manner. But, which yields results supporting the deportation. He noted that many non-Germans, especially Polish and Czech refugees were happy about the de-

206 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 206.
207 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, 206.

portation decree. He provided a number of quotations from Russians, Poles, and Czechs by way of anecdotal evidence of the decree's popularity. He also noted the apparent anti-Soviet attitudes of the Volga Germans also demonstrated by the inclusion of a few anecdotal quotations. The statements of two or three representatives of a nationality of course are not conclusive evidence of collectively held attitudes. Near the end of the report is a mention that only 30% of the operative staff for the deportation had arrived by 29 August 1941.[208] This rather important piece of negative news from Beria's point of view appears mitigated by the earlier quotations. Hence the report reads like a notification that 70% of the operative staff had still not shown up, but not to worry because the deportation order had been vindicated by its popularity among Slavs and a couple of anti-Soviet statements by Germans.

On 30 August 1941, the SNK ratified the instructions issued by the NKVD for dealing with the property left behind by the deported Germans on kolkhozes. These instructions dealt with the buildings, vehicles, agricultural implements, grain, and livestock forcibly abandoned by the German deportees. The resettled Germans were supposed to receive partial compensation for crops and livestock that remained behind.[209] The initial list of local representatives of the People's Commissariat of agriculture to be informed about providing any such compensation to the deportees only included Altai Krai, Krasnoiarsk Krai, Omsk Oblast, Novosibirsk Oblast, Pavlodar Oblast, East Kazakhstan Oblast, Kustanai Oblast, Akmola Oblast, Semipalatinsk Oblast, and North Kazakhstan Oblast.[210] These were the 10 regions designated for the reception of the ethnic Germans deported from the Volga German ASSR, Saratov Oblast, and Stalingrad Oblast.

In the territory from which the Volga Germans had been deported, the instructions ordered that each raion, Machine Tractor Station, and kolkhoz have a representative of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture to assist in the receiving and guarding of

208 Werth 2004, doc. 136, pp. 458–459.
209 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 84, ll. 3–5.
210 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 84, l. 1.

the abandoned property of the former residents. These representatives were to take full responsibility for guarding this property and the documentation regarding its transfer. These representatives were to transfer this property including buildings, agricultural machinery, livestock, grain, fodder, furniture, and money to representatives of kolkhozes. The value of this property was to be determined by a special commission to be composed of representatives of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, kolkhoz chairmen, and bank or financial section representatives.[211] Specifically regarding the crops left in the field and harvested after the deportation, the representative of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture was to buy the crops at a 30 percent discount from their acquisition value and credit the kolkhoz and its former workers through the state bank. The 30% reduction was to pay for harvesting, guarding, and transporting the crops. The remaining 70% of the value was then to be used to pay off all obligations including outstanding loans. Next from this left over amount was to finally be distributed grain and fodder up to 300 kg per person to the deportees in their new places of settlement in Kazakhstan and Siberia in exchange for work days earned. They were also to receive seed grain and fodder for collectively owned livestock at this time. The remaining grain and produce was to be sold to the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the proceeds paid into a number of funds including for seed grain, fodder, food provisions (this could provide up to another 200 kgs of grain per deportee), and livestock procurement. Deportees could access these funds as state loans.[212] The value of the conversion of produce for the kolkhoz could only be accessed after all loans, taxes, deliveries, insurance payments, and outstanding credit owed to the state had been paid in full. The remaining value could be divided among the kolkhoz workers in exchange for labor days.[213] The deportees even in theory were to only be very partially compensated for their abandoned property and what little was to be returned was

211 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 84, l. 3.
212 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 84, l. 4.
213 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 84, l. 5.

to be either in exchange for labor performed on new kolkhozes or as loans.

The deportees were supposed to receive vouchers for livestock abandoned in the Volga that could be redeemed in Kazakhstan or Siberia. This did not apply to poultry or work animals for which they received no compensation. But, both collective kolkhoz livestock and private kolkhoz worker owned livestock for the supply of meat or milk such as cows were supposed to be provided to the deportees at their places of internal exile in exchange for the issued vouchers. The number and weight of the animals was carefully noted and like in the case of grain all obligations to the state had to first be met and were subtracted from what was to be returned in Kazakhstan or Siberia.[214] This part of the proposed compensation at least on paper looked better than the other parts.

Major Ivan Ivanov, the Chief of the Special Settlement Section of the NKVD reported on finding "counter-revolutionary" enemies among the deported Germans as early as 30 August 1941 during the loading of Volga Germans onto train echelons. He issued a four page report on 3 November 1941 "On Counter-Revolutionaries Appearing among the German-Resettlers." In Saratov Oblast the UNKVD arrested two men, Goldstein and Dauberg they claimed were part of a group waiting to provide armed assistance to the German military by attacking an armory. In Stalingrad Oblast the UNKVD claimed to have liquidated a fascist organization led by two men named Schneider and Mueller working in a military construction battalion. This pattern continued on the train echelons during the deportation. On echelon 725 on its way to East Kazakhstan, Karl Aleksandr was discovered to have "terrorist intentions" and "intentions to form an anti-Soviet group." On echelon No. 864 three Germans were singled out for their oral statements as being anti-Soviet. They were named Rheinik, Wolf, and Mueller. Ivanov's report continues to name a few more German deportees allegedly making anti-Soviet or

214 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 84, l. 5.

pro-Hitler statements after arriving in Omsk Oblast.[215] The major's diligence in the need to unmask and root out "Fascist agents" among the German deportees in Siberia and Kazakhstan is reflected in later copious correspondence with local NKVD officials in these regions.

Following the deportation of the Volga Germans to Siberia and Kazakhstan the Soviet government sought to eliminate the evidence of their previous habitation of the territory. One of the first steps was to eliminate the administrative territory itself and divide its districts between the two neighboring oblasts. The Soviet state erased the former national state structure of the Volga Germans off the face of the map and with it all of its institutions.

> Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
>
> On the Administrative Construction of the Territory of the Former Volga German Republic
>
> In connection with the decree of the of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from 28 August 1941 "On Resettling Germans Living in the Region of the Volga", it is deemed necessary to:
>
> 1. Include in the composition of Saratov Oblast the following districts of the former Volga German Republic:—Balzar, Solotoje, Kamenka, Ternowka, Kukkus, Seelmann, Krasnojar, Marxstadt, Unterwalden, Fjordorowka, Gnadenflur, Krasny-Kut, Lizenderg, Ekheim.
>
> 2. Include in the composition of the Stalingrad Oblast the following districts of the former Volga German Republic: Frank, Erlanbach, Dobrinka, Pallasowka, Gmelinskaja, Alt-Poltawka, Ilowatka.
>
> Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR
> Gorkin
>
> Moscow, Kremlin, 7 September 1941[216]

In accordance with the elimination of the Volga German ASSR as a constituent administrative unit within the RSFSR and USSR the Soviet regime began to also liquidate all of its institutions. On 19

215 GARF F.9479, O. 1, D. 84, ll. 71–74.
216 Auman and Chebatoreva, p. 163.

September 1941, Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Commissar of State Security 3rd Rank Ivan Serov issued Prikaz No. 0420 ordering the dispersal of all state archive material of the Volga German ASSR in Engles to other archives.[217] The closing of the Central State Archives of the Volga German ASSR and the division of its holdings was followed up by the elimination of other remaining German institutions in the territory.

The Soviet government completely altered the character of the territory of the former Volga German ASSR after the deportation of its German population.The Soviet government initially planned to resettle 59,794 families (about 300,000 people) to replace the deported population that had formerly worked on kolkhozes. But, by 1 January 1942 they had only settled 23,936 families (about 120,000 people) or 40% of the initial plan.[218] They also physically destroyed whole villages that they had depopulated such as Rothammel, Kauz, Neu-Balzar, Freidorf, Neu-Walter, and Seewald.[219]

The day after the elimination of the Volga German ASSR the Stalin regime finally expelled all ethnic Germans from the Soviet Red Army and all other military institutions. On 8 September 1941, Joseph Stalin issued a decree to accomplish this goal.

> Directive of the Peoples Commissariat of Defense USSR
>
> No. 35105s from 8 September 1941
>
> Expel from units, academies, military instruction establishments and institutions of the Red Army, both at the front, and in the rear, all military service personnel in the ranks and the commanding staff those of German nationality and send them to internal regions for assignment to construction battalions.
>
> In those cases, when commanders and commissars jointly reckon it is necessary to leave military service personnel of German nationality in a unit, they are required to present a petition on the reasons motivating this deci-

217 GARF F. R-9401, O 1a, D. 99, l. 89.

218 Alfred Eisfeld and Viktor Herdt, eds., *Deportation, Sondersiedlung, Arbeitsarmee: Deutsche in der Sowjetunion 1941 bis 1956*, Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1996. doc. 138, pp. 139–141.

219 Timothy and Rosalinda Kloberdanz, *Thunder on the Steppe: Volga German Folklife in a Changing Russia.* Lincoln, NE: AHSGR, 1993, p. 34.

> sion to the NKO through the Military Soviets of fronts, regions, and sections of the army.
>
> Inform me about the execution of this directive no later than 15 September.
>
> Peoples Commissar of Defense USSR J. Stalin[220]

In the wake of the deportation order on the Volga Germans, the Stalin regime began the systematic deportation of Germans in other European areas of the USSR region by region. A series of six GKO orders followed by NKVD prikazes decreed the forced removal of more than 380,000 more Germans in western regions of the USSR. In chronological order these regions were Moscow and Rostov, the North Caucasus and Tula, eastern Ukraine, Voronezh, the Transcaucasus, Chechnya and Daghestan, Kalmykia, and Kubyishev between 6 September and 21 November 1941. In total 831,637 Germans were decreed to be subject to internal deportation.[221] So almost half of the Germans deported eastward to Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1941 came from areas outside of the Volga region.

The first areas to be ethnically cleansed of Germans after the Volga region were the city and oblast of Moscow, and Rostov Oblast. GKO Order 636ss issued on 6 September 1941 initially subjected 30,017 Germans in these regions to deportation to Kazakhstan, Altai Krai, and Novosibirsk Oblast.[222] In actuality the number of deportees was considerably greater. It included 8,640 from Moscow and the surrounding oblast rounded up by 15 September 1941 and sent off to Karaganda and Kyzyl-Orda oblasts in Kazakhstan. From Rostov Oblast the NKVD deported 38,288 Germans eastward by 18 September 1941. A few were destined for west Siberia, 2,347 to Altai Krai and 1,964 to Novosibirsk Oblast and the rest to South Kazakhstan, Jambul, and Kzyl-Orda oblasts in Kazakhstan.[223] Then the GKO decreed the largest deportation

220 A.A. German, T.S. Ilarionova, I.R. Plehve, *Istoriia nemtsev rossii: Khrestomatia*.Moscow: MSNK-Press, 2005, doc. 8.2.3, p. 253.
221 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, ll. 266–271.
222 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 266.
223 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 40.

of Germans after the Volga German deportations on 26 September 1941 with GKO Order No. 696ss deporting 149,206 from Tula Oblast, Krasnodar Krai, Ordzhonidze Krai, North Ossetia ASSR, and Karbardino-Balkar ASSR to Kazakhstan, Krasnoiarsk Krai, and Novosibirsk Oblast.[224] This number was so large because it included almost 50,000 Germans forcibly evacuated from Crimea to Ordzhonikidze Krai in August 1941. This was followed up by deportations from the three easternmost oblasts of Ukraine, Zaporozhia, Voroshilov, and Stalin. The western and central parts of Ukraine had already come under German rule by the time of GKO Order 702ss of 22 September 1941. During October 1941 the NKVD deported 79,569 out of 109,487 Germans slated to be deported from this region to Kazakhstan and Novosibirsk Oblast. On 8 October 1941, the GKO issued decree no. 743ss and decree no. 744ss, the first deporting 5,308 Germans from Voronezh and the second 46,588 from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The final GKO deportation order on the resettlement of Germans was 837ss of 22 October 1941 exiling 7,306 Germans from Daghestan and the Chechen-Ingush ASSR to Kazakhstan during November 1941. Another two SNK decrees 84-KS on 3 November 1941 and 280-KS of 21 November 1941 deported another 5,965 Germans from the Kalmyk ASSR and 8,665 from Kubyishev respectively to Kazakhstan.[225] The NKVD deported another 20,000 or so ethnic Germans from various front regions in places like Kharkhov Oblast, Dnepropetrovsk Oblast, and Leningrad to Kazakhstan and Siberia on orders from Front Soviets.[226] Thus from September to December 1941, the NKVD deported close to 850,000 Germans to Siberia and Kazakhstan. This number is considerably greater than the number to arrive alive in their destinations. Although the exact numbers are impossible to pin down due to contradictory nature of the statistical data in the Soviet archives. But, a rough estimate of the total number of deaths in transit is probably close to 50,000 or 6% of the deportees.

224 GARF F.9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 266.
225 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 267.
226 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 268.

**Table 10: Deportation of Germans in USSR According to Summary on 12 December 1948[227]**

| Origins | Decree | Date | Planned | Actual | Destination |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Volga German ASSR, Saratov, and Stalingrad oblasts | SNK and CC of the CPSU 2060-935ss | 26 August 1941[228] | 480,000 | 447,168 | Kazakhstan, Altai, Krasnoa-isk, Omsk, and Novosibirsk |
| Moscow and Moscow and Rostov oblasts | GKO 636ss | 6 September 1941 | 30,017 | 44,692 | Kazakhstan, Altai, and Novosibirsk |
| Krasnodar, Tula, Ordzhonikidze, North Ossetia, and KB ASSR | GKO 698ss | 26 September 1941 | 141,240 | 149,206 | Kazakhstan, Krasnoiarsk, and Novosibirsk |
| Zaporozhia, Voro-shilov, and Stalin oblasts Ukrainian SSR | GKO 702ss | 22 September 1941 | 109,487 | 79,569 | Kazakhstan and Novosibirsk |
| Voronezh Oblast | GKO 743ss | 8 October 1941 | 5,125 | 5,308 | Omsk and Novosibirsk |
| Armenian, Geor-gian, and Azerbai-jan SSRs | GKO 744ss | 8 October 1941 | 46,533 | 46,356 | Kazakhstan and Novosibirsk |
| Daghestan and Chechen-Ingush ASSRs | GKO 827ss | 22 October 1941 | 4,570 | 7,306 | Kazakhstan |
| Kalmyk ASSR | SNK 84-KS | 3 November 1941 | 6,000 | 5,965 | Kazakhstan |
| Kuibyshev Oblast | SNK 280-KS | 21 November 1941 | ---------- | 8,665 | Kazakhstan |
| Total SNK and GOKO Orders | ---------- | ---------- | 831,637 | 794,235 | Kazakhstan and Siberia |
| Kharkhov | Military Soviet | ---------- | ---------- | 851 | Kazakhstan |
| Dnepropetrovsk | Military Soviet | ---------- | ---------- | 3,384 | Kazakhstan |
| Crimea ASSR | Military Soviet | October 1941 | ---------- | 2,233 | Kazakhstan and Omsk |
| Kalinnin | Military Soviet | June 1942 | ---------- | 267 | Omsk |
| Gorky | Military Soviet | October 1941 | ---------- | 3,162 | Omsk |
| Leningrad and Leningrad Oblast | Military Soviet | August–November 1941 | ---------- | 10,000 | Omsk, Irkutsk, Krasnoiarsk, and Yakutia |
| Krasnodar and Rostov | GKO 1828ss | 29 May 1942 | ---------- | NA | NA |
| Total | ---------- | ---------- | ---------- | 806,533 | Kazakhstan and Siberia |

227 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, ll. 266–269.

228 The document incorrectly gives the date as 12 August 1941.

Following the deportation of the Volga Germans, the Stalin regime proceeded with the expulsion of the remaining German population in European areas of the USSR still under its control to Kazakhstan and Siberia. The newly formed GKO (State Defense Committee) headed by Joseph Stalin issued most of the deportation orders pertaining to Germans living outside the Volga region. Unlike the Volga German decree which ordered most of them deported to Siberia, these later deportation orders favored Kazakhstan as a destination.

The first GKO order came on 6 September 1941, GKO-636ss ordered the deportation of 8,617 Germans from the city and environs of Moscow and 21,400 from Rostov Oblast. The decree ordered the NKVD to forcibly resettle 4,000 of these people to Karaganda Oblast, 8,000 to Jambul Oblast, 8,000 to Kyzyl-Orda Oblast, and 10,017 to South Kazakhstan Oblast, all in Kazakhstan. The NKVD had from 10 to 15 September to complete the deportation of Germans from Moscow and from 15 to 20 September for Rostov Oblast. Most of the remainder of the decree was identical to the 26 August 1941 resolution dealing with the Volga Germans. Two notable differences are that instead of a limit of one ton of baggage per a family as specified for the Volga Germans, the Germans in Moscow and Rostov had a limit of 200 kg per family member. A perhaps more important difference was the provision for providing up to 2 thousand rubles of credit from the Agricultural Bank to the deportees for the purpose of building or repairing houses in the event they did not receive housing fit for human habitation. The decree thus contained a clear admission that the Soviet government lacked adequate housing resources for the deportees in Kazakhstan. The Stalin regime thus acknowledged that it was sending part of the deported population to live in the harsh steppes of Kazakhstan without adequate shelter. These loans had to be paid back in full plus 3% interest within five years with the first payments due on the second year.[229] The ability of urban professionals from Moscow to build houses in sparsely populated areas of Kazakhstan was not ad-

229 Berdinskikh, doc. 5, pp. 317–318.

dressed in the decree. Nor was the question of where wood, glass, and nails for such construction might be obtained. The problem of inadequate housing for German deportees in Kazakhstan would only grow as more and more of them arrived in the republic.

On 8 September 1941, Beria issued Prikaz 001237 on conducting the deportation of Germans living in the city and surrounding oblast of Moscow. This decree assigned the execution of the operation to the head of the UNKVD of Moscow Oblast and the head of the Second Directorate of the NKVD. It ordered they be provided with four officers and 84 soldiers from the Red Army to assist them in the operation, one officer and 21 soldiers for each of the deportation echelons. The decree also ordered that the local NKVD arrest all anti-Soviet and unreliable elements among the deportees during the operation, but deport their families in the same manner as the rest of the population.[230] In almost all details the decree resembled the NKVD prikaz for executing the deportation of the Volga Germans.

The head of the UNKVD in Moscow and Moscow Oblast issued a short report on the results of the operation on 15 September 1941. He noted that the NKVD had completed the operation. They had loaded 7,384 Germans in this region onto three train echelons without any incident.[231] A revised count issued on 2 October 1941 noted the number of Germans to be deported from the Moscow region had reached 8,284 people with another 356 awaiting transport.[232] A later revision counted 8,640 Germans from Moscow city and Moscow Oblast to Karaganda and Kyzyl-Orda oblasts in Kazakhstan which equals the sum of these two figures.[233] The capital region had been mostly cleansed of its once large German population.

The next GKO decree signed by Stalin ordering the deportation of Germans to Kazakhstan came on 21 September 1941. GKO Order 698ss ordered the deportation of 34,287 Germans from Krasnodar Krai, 95,489 from Ordzhonikidze Krai, 3,208 from Tula

230 Milova vol. II, doc. 14, pp. 79–80.
231 Berdinskikh, doc. 8, p. 320.
232 Milova, vol. II, doc. 24, p. 110.
233 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 40.

Oblast, 5,327 from Karbardino-Balkar ASSR, and 2,929 from the North Ossetian ASSR. It instructed the NKVD to carry out this mass resettlement from 25 September to 10 October 1941.[234] In almost all other respects it was nearly identical to the one dealing with Germans in the Moscow and Rostov oblasts.

On 22 September 1941, Beria issued NKVD Prikaz N 001347 on conducting the deportation of the Germans from Krasnodar Krai, Orzhonikidze Krai, Tula Oblast, the Karbardino-Balkar ASSR and the North Ossetian ASSR. This decree contained instructions for the deportation of the Germans from these regions almost identical to the ones issued regarding the Volga Germans. It also assigned 425 NKVD officers, 1,550 regular police officers and 4,750 Red Army soldiers to remove the Germans from these regions. Ordzhonikidze Krai received 250 NKVD workers, 1,000 police men, and 2,300 men from the Red Army. Krasnodar krai got 100 men from the NKVD, 250 from the police, and 2,000 from the army. Karbardino-Balkar ASSR in turn had 50 NKVD workers, 200 police, and 300 Red Army soldiers. North Ossetia ASSR received 25 men from the NKVD, 100 from the police, and 300 from the army. Finally, the decree assigned Tula Oblast only 50 Red Army soldiers.[235] These men had orders to forcibly resettle the entire German population of these regions to Kazakhstan.

On 23 September 1941, the NKVD specified the distribution of resettlement for the deportees from these regions. Ten oblasts in Kazakhstan were to receive between 10 thousand and 22 thousand Germans each. These oblasts were Akmola 20,000, Alma-Ata 10,000, East Kazakhstan 10,000, Jambul 10,000, Karaganda 10,000, Kustanai 20,000, Pavlodar 10,000, North Kazakhstan 20,000, Semipalatinsk 10,000, and South Kazakhstan 22,000.[236] A telegram from Deputy Chief of the NKVD Chernyshev to the head of the NKVD of Kazakhstan two days later slightly altered these numbers. The number to be received in Alma-Ata was slightly reduced to 9,500 while the number for Karaganda was reduced substan-

234 Bugai 1998, doc. 9, pp. 30–32.
235 Milova vol. II, doc. 15, pp. 81–84.
236 Milova Vol. II, doc. 26, pp. 112–113.

tially to 2,900.[237] Ultimately, Kazakhstan received most of the Germans from the North Caucasus and Kuban.

In mid October the NKVD issued a report on the success of the deportation of the Germans from Ordzhonikidze and Krasnodar krais. By 14 October 1941, the NKVD had dispatched 38,136 German deportees from Krasnodar Krai to Kazakhstan. Another 2,500 remained to be sent. The number of Germans deported from Ordzhonikidze Krai by this date had reached 74,570 people.[238] Over a hundred thousand Germans from these two regions alone reached Kazakhstan by the middle of October. The entire German population deported according to GKO Order 698ss was 141,240.[239] This made it the second largest deportation of Germans eastward after the Volga German ASSR, Saratov Oblast, and Stalingrad Oblast.

> Top Secret Information
> On the resettlement of Germans from Krasnodar and Ordzhonikidze Krai
> October 1941
>
> In executing the Resolution of the State Committee of Defense of the USSR No 698-ss of 21 September 1941—the NKVD of the USSR undertook the resettlement of Germans from Krasnodar and Ordzhonikidze krais to the Kazakh SSR.
>
> The total subject to resettlement from Krasnodar Krai—34,287 people and from Ordzhonikidze—95,489 people of this number 50,000 Germans arrived in Ordzhonikidze krai from the Crimean ASSR.
>
> From this composition on 14 October 1941 from Krasnodar krai were sent out 38,136, remaining to be sent out are 2500 people and from Ordzhonikidze were sent 74,570 people.
>
> The loading and shipping in echelons is continuing.
>
> Deputy Peoples Commissar of Internal Affairs
> Union of SSRs Commissar of State Security III
> Rank Kobulov
> Dep. Chief of the Section for Special Settlements
> NKVD USSR
> Captain of State Security
> Konradov[240]

237 Milova, Vol. II, doc. 27, p. 114.
238 Bugai 1998, doc. 12, p. 34.
239 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 266.
240 N.F. Bugai, ed., *Deportatsiia narodov Kryma: Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii*. Moscow: INSAN, 2002, doc. 49, p. 80.

Most of western and central Ukraine had already been conquered by the German military by late September 1941. At this point the rapidly advancing German army threatened to take all of Ukraine. The Stalin regime could thus only partially deport the German population living in eastern Ukraine. On 22 September 1941, Stalin issued GKO-702ss ordering the deportation of the Germans in Zaporozhia, Stalin, and Voroshilov oblasts. The decree calls for the resettlement of 63,000 Germans from Zaporozhia Oblast, 41,000 from Stalin Oblast, and 5,487 from Voroshilov Oblast to Kazakhstan. Stalin gave the NKVD from 25 September to 2 October to deport the Germans from Zaporozhia Oblast and from 25 September to 10 October to deport them from Stalin and Voroshilov oblasts.[241] The 109,487 quota for deporting Germans from eastern Ukraine in fall 1941 was not fulfilled by a large margin.[242] The remaining three quarters of the German population living in Ukraine had already fallen out of the reach of the NKVD under the protection of the German occupation regime.

Beria issued NKVD Prikaz N 001354 on 23 September 1941 providing for the execution of this deportation plan. It differed from other similar prikazi relating to the deportation of Germans only in the details pertaining to the personnel assigned to the task. The three Ukrainian oblasts of Zaporozhia, Stalin, and Voroshilov received 600 NKVD officers, 2,700 police men, and 4,800 Red Army soldiers to carry out the forced removal of Germans. The NKVD distributed these men in the following manner. Beria assigned Zaporozhia Oblast 300 NKVD officials, 1,500 police men, and 2,500 soldiers from the Red Army. Stalin Oblast in turn received 250 NKVD officers, 1,000 police and 2,000 soldiers. Finally, Voroshilov Oblast got 50 men from the NKVD, 200 from the police, and 300 from the Red Army.[243] These men had the responsibility to clear the areas of the Ukrainian SSR that remained under Soviet control of all Germans.

241 Bugai 1998, doc. 10, pp. 32–33.
242 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 267.
243 Milova, vol. II, doc. 16, pp. 85–87.

The NKVD, however, failed to even deport the small fraction of the Germans left in Soviet ruled Ukraine at this time. An NKVD report from 2 October 1941 listed the number of Germans in Ukraine subject to resettlement at 111,778 of which 53,566 were in Zaporozhia Oblast, 36,205 in Stalin Oblast, and 12,807 in Voroshilov Oblast.[244] But, four days later the actual deportation figures showed a considerably greater shortfall. The NKVD issued a report on 6 October 1941 on its progress in this operation. So far they had only loaded onto train echelons bound for Kazakhstan 26,026 Germans from Stalin Oblast and 30,352 from Zaporozhia Oblast.[245] A later report issued on 8 October 1941 noted that the number of Germans deported from Zaporozhia had increased to 31,718. The NKVD had also by this time deported an additional 8,706 Germans from Voroshilov Oblast.[246] The total number of Germans cleansed from eastern Ukraine by 1 January 1942 numbered 35,925 from Stalin Oblast, 31,320 from Zaporozhia Oblast, and only 12,488 from Voroshilov Oblast.[247] In total during October 1941 the NKVD deported 79,569 Germans from eastern Ukraine to Kazakhstan and Novosibirsk Oblast.[248] Despite almost 400,000 Germans living in the Ukrainian SSR at the start of World War II, the NKVD was only able to deport about a quarter of them. The rest escaped westward eventually and most of them were later forcibly repatriated to the USSR in 1945 and 1946 to become special settlers.

On 8 October 1941, Beria sent a report to Stalin on the German population of Voronezh Oblast in preparation for their deportation. He noted that the population numbered 5,125 people of which 45 were members of the Communist Party and 43 members of the Komsomol. During the counting of the Germans of Vornezh Oblast the NKVD arrested 112 anti-Soviet and unreliable elements. The remaining 5,013 Germans were to be deported to No-

244 Milova, vol. II, doc. 32, p. 120.
245 Bugai 1998, doc. 13, p. 35.
246 Bugai 1998, doc. 14, p. 35.
247 Milova vol. II, doc. 54, pp. 171–172.
248 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 267.

vosibirsk Oblast.[249] At the same time Beria also informed Stalin about the situation regarding Germans in the Transcaucasus. He reported that there were 48,375 Germans in the three republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan and that 29,609 lived in rural areas. Only 372 were party members and another 1,077 belonged to the Komsomol. Finally, during this count the NKVD had arrested 1,842 anti-Soviet and unreliable elements among the German population. The rest were subject to deportation.[250] In total the additional number of Germans to be deported grew by over 50,000 on 8 October 1941.

Stalin ordered the deportation of the Germans from Voronezh Oblast, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan the same day. The GKO issued two deportation decrees covering Germans on 8 October 1941. The first, GKO Order No. 743ss ordered the deportation of 5,125 Germans from Voronezh Oblast to Novosibirsk Oblast between 15 and 22 October 1941.[251] The second one, GKO Order No. 744ss dealt with the Transcaucasian republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. The NKVD had from 15 to 30 October 1941 to deport 23,580 Germans from Georgia, 22,741 from Azerbaijan, and 212 from Armenia to Kazakhstan.[252] The German colonies in the Transcaucasus had been particularly prosperous even after the Bolshevik Revolution. The dispersal of these communities across Kazakhstan completely pauperized them.

Beria issued prikazes regarding the deportation of the Germans in Voronezh Oblast and the Transcaucasian republics on 11 October 1941. Prikaz No. 001387 dealt with Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan and Prikaz No. 001488 covered Voronezh Oblast.[253] The prikaz on the deportation of the Germans from the Transcaucasus assigned responsibility for the operation in Georgia to Commissar Rapava, Azerbaijan to Senior Major Yakuvov, and

249 Bugai 1992, doc. 25, p. 60.
250 Bugai 1992, doc. 27, p. 61.
251 Bugai 1998, doc. 15, p. 36.
252 Bugai 1998, doc. 16, pp. 37–38.
253 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, ll. 81–82 and Werth 2004, doc. 145, pp. 470–471.

Armenia Major Martirosov.[254] The NKVD deported 5,308 Germans from Voronezh Oblast to Novosibirsk and Omsk oblasts during October 1941 and another 46,356 from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to Novosibirsk Oblast and Kazakhstan.[255] The nearly 50,000 Transcaucasian Germans sent to Kazakhstan found the harsh climate of the region especially difficult to endure.

The instructions issued by Beria for conducting the deportation of Germans from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia during October 1941 were very similar to those issued for the Volga Germans. It noted that "Resettlement is to be applied to all inhabitants of the German natsional'nost', living in the Georgian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian SSRs. Members of the Communist Party and Komsomol are to be resettled at the same time together with the remaining population." A note stated that certain individuals may be excluded from internal deportation only by special decrees by the NKVD. Otherwise all Germans living in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan were to be deported to Kazakhstan including members of families of Red Army soldiers and officers.[256] Proven political loyalty to the Soviet regime did not earn the condemned Germans any reprieve.

The NKVD was to form operative troikas consisting of a chief of the district section of the NKVD, chief of the militia, and NKVD chairman. These troikas were to form operative groups from the operative workers of the NKVD, the police, and members of the local soviet-party organization, and the people given responsibility for taking control of abandoned property. The operative groups were to go to all collective farms, villages, settlements, and cities where Germans lived and fill out registration cards on every family subject to resettlement. Each family head was responsible for all the other members in his family. The operative groups were then to create a plan to collect those subject to deportation and deliver them to train echelons. This plan was to include the number of families and individuals subject to resettlement, carts and

254 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, ll. 81.
255 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 267.
256 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 84.

other forms of transport on hand, and the schedule for moving them to the train stations. Two days before their resettlement the operative group was to notify the Germans that they were to be resettled. The NKVD had explicit orders to "not allow any kind of group or collective discussion of questions" by the deportees.[257] The forced resettlement was to be carried out as fast and smoothly as possible.

While the NKVD allowed no political exceptions to deportation for the Germans living in the Transcaucasus, it did allow ethno-racial ones. Families where the head of the family was not German by natsional'nost' and the wife was German were not to be deported.[258] Otherwise all other Germans were to be deported from Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan including as already noted members of the Communist Party, Komsomol, Red Army and their families.[259] In cases where individuals subject to deportation were absent from their homes they were to be included in the count of deportees and later moved to their assigned new place of settlement in Kazakhstan to join the rest of their family.[260] Given the extreme rarity of intermarriages at the time there were very few exemptions to deportation granted.

Each member of the German families subject to deportation from the Transcaucasus could bring up to 200 kg of small household goods with them up to one ton per family as well as an unlimited amount of money. Large and bulky items were prohibited. City dwellers could sell their property through trusted persons and have the money sent to them in their new locations over a ten day period. The remaining unmovable property of the deportees was to be transferred to the representatives of Soviet organizations. This property included agricultural equipment, produce, grain, animal feed, and live stock. For this property with the exception of horses the deportees would be issued vouchers redeemable in their new places of residence after deductions for

257 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 85.
258 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 85.
259 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 84.
260 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 86.

obligatory deliveries for 1941 and any arrears of past years. Baggage packed to take on the deportation trains was to be labeled with the surname of the deported family that owned it.[261] The deportees were also to be told that they needed to bring enough food with them to last them for at least a month. The troikas were to use kolkhoz owned automobiles and trucks to transport the deportees and their property to the train stations. In the event of insufficient cars and trucks they were to negotiate with Soviet and Party organizations for additional means of transport. They were to leave the kolkhoz or district with the deportees towards the points of embarkation as a single column consisting of the entire operative group. The NKVD was to appoint in advance one transport worker at each station to organize the reception and boarding of the arriving deportees and then dispatch the train echelons according to the established schedules. At the station the senior most operative officer in the column was to transfer a list and responsibility for the deportees and their property to the chief of the loading point. At the loading point in the case of the accumulation of a large number of deportees the chief of the point was ordered to consider measures necessary to load them onto the train wagons.[262] By this time the Soviet regime had perfected the procedures for the mass movement of people as just another socialist industrial operation.

On 13 October 1941 the SNK and Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan issued a resolution on the reception of the German deportees from the Transcaucasian republics.[263] Initially the Kazakh authorities planned to settle around 5,000 people from this contingent in each of the following oblasts: Alma-Ata, Akmola, East Kazakhstan, Jambul, Karaganda, Kustanai, Pavlodar, North Kazakhstan, Semipalatinsk, and South Ka-

261 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 86.

262 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 87.

263 G.A. Karpykova, ed. *Iz istorii nemtsev Kazakhstana (1921–1975), Sbornik dokumentov iz arkhiva presidenta respubliki Kazakhstan.* Almaty-Moscow: Gotika, 1997, doc. 51, pp. 105–106.

zakhstan.[264] Thus all 50,000 Transcaucasian Germans were slated for forced resettlement across the much larger expanse of Kazakhstan.

The final GKO decree finished cleansing the Germans from the Caucasus. GKO-827ss ordered the deportation of the Germans from the North Caucasian autonomies of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and the Dagestan ASSR on 22 October 1941.[265] Between 25 and 30 October 1941 the NKVD was to deport the 4,000 Germans in Dagestan and 574 in the Chechen-Ingush ASSR to Kazakhstan.[266] The actual number of Germans deported from these two republics was 7,306.[267] Little has been written about the origins and life of these small German communities high in the Caucasus Mountains. Their annihilation by Stalin has guaranteed that this will remain the case.

After this flurry of deportation orders issued by the GKO under the personal control of Stalin, the Soviet government returned to attempting to maintain the illusion of legality. The SNK issued the deportation orders dealing with the Germans in Kuibyshev and the Kalmyk ASSR. SNK No. 84ks of 3 November 1941 ordered the deportation of the Germans from the Kalmyk ASSR. SNK No. 280ks of 21 November 1941 ordered the deportation of the Germans from Kuibyshev Oblast. Both these decrees specified Kazakhstan as the destination for the deportees.[268] The reason for shifting authority from the GKO to the SNK for these two deportation orders is not known.

The NKVD marked 11,500 Germans in Kuibyshev Oblast and Kuibyshev City for deportation to Karaganda Oblast Kazakhstan. The deportation of 1680 Germans from Kuibyshev and Chiaplevsk cities had already been completed by 15 September 1941.[269] The total number actually deported from Kubyishev Oblast was 8,666.

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264 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, ll. 77–78.
265 GARF F. 9479, o. 1, d. 372, l. 267.
266 N.F. Bugai, ed. *"Mobilizovat' nemtsev v robochie kolonny … I. Stalin": Sbornik dokumentov (1940-e gody)*. Moscow: Gotika, 1998, doc. 17, pp. 38–39.
267 GARF F. 9479, O.1, D. 372, l. 267.
268 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 267.
269 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 40.

The actual number of ethnic Germans deported from the Kalmyk ASSR in November 1941 was 5,965.[270] This last 14,000 plus Germans from the eastern most areas of European Russia made the ethnic cleansing of the areas of the USSR west of the Urals still controlled by Moscow of its German population almost total.

In addition to deportations ordered by the central organs of Soviet power such as the GKO and SNK, military soviets at the front ordered smaller deportations of Germans to Kazakhstan and Siberia. Deportations ordered by military soviets took place in Kharkhov Oblast, Dnepetrovsk Oblast, Crimea, Kalinin Oblast, Gorky Oblast, and Leningrad.[271] The NKVD deported a total of 27,445 Germans in accordance with these orders.[272] The small number of Germans removed from the actual front lines of battle meant that a very large number, nearly four hundred thousand, Germans came under the rule of Nazi Germany. The Stalin regime had justified the deportations as a way of preventing any possible collaboration between the Russian Germans and the Nazi occupiers. Their ruthless policy of repression combined with their failure to clear western Ukraine of Germans practically ensured some measure of collaboration between the two groups of Germans.

The NKVD figures for the total number of people subject to deportation and those actually deported as well as those to arrive in Kazakhstan and Siberia vary. As early as 5 November 1941, the Soviet government had marked 868,588 Germans for deportation and already deported 607,327 of them.[273] On 25 November 1941, the NKVD reported that 868,588 Germans had been slated for deportation and 693,876 actually loaded onto trains and sent eastward.[274] The counts in November took place while the NKVD was still deporting Germans eastward.

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270 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 267.
271 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 268.
272 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 268.
273 T.V. Tsarevskaia-Diakina, ed., *Spetspereselentsy v SSSR:* vol. V of *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: Konets 1920-kh – pervaia polvina 1950-kh godov,* Moscow: Rosspen, 2004, doc. 88, p. 325.
274 GARF F. R-9479, o. 1, d. 83, l. 204.

**Table 11: Progress of Resettlement of Germans 25 November 1941**[275]

| Destination | Number Planned | Actual Number |
|---|---|---|
| Kazakh SSR | 467,600 | 310,195 |
| Altai Krai | 110,000 | 94,799 |
| Krasnoairsk Krai | 75,000 | 77,259 |
| Novosibirsk Oblast | 130,988 | 138,308 |
| Omsk Oblast | 85,000 | 85,727 |
| Total | 868,588 | 693,876 |

**Table 12: Resettlement of Germans in Kazakhstan 25 November 1941**[276]

| Oblast | Planned | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| South Kazakhstan | 48,000 | 23,832 |
| Jambul | 41,000 | 20,994 |
| North Kazakhstan | 60,000 | 48,303 |
| Alma-Ata | 30,000 | 8,764 |
| Aktiubinsk | 15,000 | 5,554 |
| Pavlodar | 45,000 | 43,202 |
| Kustanai | 60,000 | 30,010 |
| Akmola | 60,000 | 56,753 |
| East Kazakhstan | 32,000 | 28,036 |
| Karaganda | 29,600 | 8,304 |
| Semipalatinsk | 50,000 | 38,170 |
| Kyzyl-Orda | 15,000 | 3,608 |
| Total for Kazakh SSR | 485,600 | 315,530 |

Later attempts by the NKVD near or after the completion of the deportation of the Germans from European areas of the USSR to Kazakhstan and Siberia to come up with coherent figures varied again. On 13 December 1941, a report from the deputy head of the NKVD Special Settlement Section, Captain Konradov tabulated that 897,981 Germans were subject to forced resettlement by various Soviet decrees and that 803,138 had actually been sent to places of exile.[277] Konradov reported to his superior Major Ivanov

275 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 204.

276 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 204.

277 O.L. Milova, ed. *Deportatsii narodov SSSR (1930–1950-e gody), Chast' 2. Deportatsiia nemtsev (Sentiabr' 1941–Fevral' 1942 gg.).* Moscow: RAN, 1995, vol. II, doc. 9, p. 56.

a few weeks later on 25 December 1941 that the NKVD had counted 904,255 Germans in the USSR and resettled 856,168 of them.[278] A still later report from 13 July 1942 calculated the total number of Germans deported eastward by 1 January 1942 as 799,459.[279] A tabulation of 1 July 1948 placed the total number of Germans deported in 1941–1945 as 949,849.[280] A report from December 1948 gave different figures. The total number of Germans subject to deportation according to GKO and SNK decrees reached 831,637 people. The actual number deported, however, was considerably less. According to the NKVD 37,402 less for only 794,235 deportees. The NKVD noted that the causes for this difference were inexact counting, deaths due to enemy bombing raids, flight of those to be resettled at the staging areas, and other losses due to the conditions at the front lines.[281] Including the German deportees exiled by military soviets at the front the total number of deportees counted by the NKVD was 806,533 of which 1,490 did not arrive. The number of German deportees arriving in Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1941 was thus 805,043.[282] The number of recorded deaths in transit is extremely fragmentary. One report only covering echelons sent to nine of the 13 oblasts in Kazakhstan to receive German deportees recorded a mere 437 deaths.[283] The number of acknowledged missing, however, is much greater than the recorded deaths. At the end of 1948 the NKVD confirmed that unidentified losses totaled 38,890. It is probable that the vast majority of the 1,490 counted by the NKVD as missing during transit as well as the 37,402 claimed to have been lost at loading were in actuality deaths during the deportation eastward.[284] That would bring the actual losses during the deportation into the tens of thousands.

278 Milova, vol. II, doc. 12, pp. 63–69.
279 GARF F. R-9479, o. 1, d. 83, l. 203.
280 GARF F. R-9479, o. 1, d. 573, l. 286.
281 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, ll. 267–268.
282 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 268.
283 GARF F R-9479, o. 1, d. 85, l. 56.
284 GARF F 9479, o. 1, d. 372, ll. 266–271.

**Table 13: Deportation of German Special Setters from 3 September 1941 to 1 January 1942[285]**

| Oblast from which deported | Number of deportees | Number of echelons |
|---|---|---|
| Moscow and City of Moscow | 8,640 | 5 |
| Tula | 2,702 | 1 |
| Rostov | 38,742 | 17 |
| Krasnodar Krai | 37,738 | 15 |
| Ordzhonokidze Krai | 99,990 | 38 |
| Karbardino-Balkaria | 5,803 | 3 |
| North Ossetia | 2, 415 | 1 |
| Daghestan | 7,306 | 3 |
| Gorky | 3,162 | 2 |
| Kalmyk ASSR | 5,848 | 4 |
| Vononezh | 5,125 | 2 |
| Kuibyshev | 8,782 | 4 |
| Zaporozhia | 31,320 | 14 |
| Voroshilovgrad | 12,488 | 4 |
| Stalin UkSSR | 35,925 | 16 |
| Dnepropetrovsk | 3,250 | 1 |
| Crimea ASSR | 1,900 | 1 |
| Georgia SSR | 20,423 | 12 |
| Armenia SSR | 212 | 1 |
| Azerbaidzhan SSR | 23,593 | 12 |
| Stalingrad | 26,245 | 12 |
| Saratov | 46,706 | 22 |
| Former ASSR of the Volga Germans | 371,164 | 154 |
| Total | 799,459 | 344 |

Germans already living in Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia were subjected to forced resettlement within these regions away from big cities and border regions. The Stalin regime expelled all of the Germans in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from the larger cities of these two republics. The Soviet authorities forcibly relocated them on collective and state farms. On 16 October 1941, a resolution by the Central Committee of the Communist Party branch in Kazakhstan banned Germans from living in Alma-Ata and oblast centers of the republic.[286] The SNK passed Resolution 57K on 30 October 1941 expelling Germans from oblast centers

285 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 203.
286 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* p. 116.

and industrial regions in the Uzbek SSR and the oblasts of Molotov, Cheliabinsk, Sverdlovsk, and Chkalov (Orenburg) in the Urals and their resettlement on kolkhozes and sovkhozes.[287] This was followed up by SNK Resolution 180 KS of 14 November 1941 forcibly relocating Germans away from the border regions of Chita Oblast. This resolution applied to a total of 82 families.[288] Another resolution also passed by the SNK on 6 January 1942, prohibited Germans from living in Tashkent and the oblast capitals of Uzbekistan.[289] The next month, the Soviet government forcibly removed all of the Germans living in Tashkent and sent them to the areas surrounding Samarkand and Bukhara. Like the Germans deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia from western regions of the USSR, those already living east of the Urals found themselves later subject to forced labor during the Second World War.

The deportations deprived the Germans of all of their collective and most of their personal property. The mass expropriation of property from the Germans without proper compensation led to them being poorly fed, housed, and clothed in Kazakhstan and Siberia. They also lacked medical care in their new locations. Prior to the deportations the Germans had more than enough food to feed themselves, proper housing, sufficiently warm clothing, and adequate medical facilities. The loss of their farms, houses, and institutions directly led to massive morbidity and mortality among the group.

The value and amount of property lost by the Germans as a result of the deportations is impossible to fully estimate. The Stalin regime confiscated a huge amount of real property in the form of land, buildings, and physical infrastructure as well as industrial enterprises. It also seized a significant sum of money in the form of private bank accounts and the finances of various institutions

287 Pobol and Polian, doc. 3.61, p. 370.

288 Pobol and Polian, doc. 3.62, p. 371.

289 Viktor Krieger, "Deportationen der Russlanddeutschen 1941–1945 und die Folgen" in A. Eisfeld (Ed.), *Von der Autonomiegrundung zur Verbannung und Entrechtung. Die Jahre 1918 und 1941 bis 1948 in der Geschichte der Deutschen in Russland* (146). Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, 2008, p. 113 and endnote 31, p. 121.

and organizations.[290] In addition to collectively and privately owned land, houses, livestock, grain, various preserved foods, furniture, and assorted personal possessions they also permanently lost their churches, graveyards, libraries, museums, and monuments. The actual value of such losses goes far beyond their mere monetary worth.

The transit itself to Siberia and Kazakhstan occurred under extremely primitive conditions. Armed soldiers forcibly loaded the Germans slated for deportation into the train wagons like cattle. Ida Bender a survivor deported from the Volga region to Krasnoiarsk Krai recalls.

> The wide middle door on each on each car had been pushed open and we were told to board the cars. Wooden plank beds, made of rough thick boards, lined the walls. Mother, Lussya, Vitali, and I took a spot above the corner next to the small barred opening, which passed for a window. Father, Alfons and Ewald sat under the plank beds on top of their bundles. The authorities packed in more people until we were crunched in tightly, hardly able to move. It was like a huge coffin.[291]

Many train wagons had over 40 deportees in them.[292] Each wagon had only a bucket or hole to serve as a toilet and this often proved insufficient for such a large number of people.[293] The packed and unsanitary conditions led to the spread of gastro-intestinal disease, measles, and other illnesses.[294] On average the train trip to their final destination lasted about two weeks. But, in some cases it took much longer. Train echelon No. 816 from the Volga German ASSR to the Krasnoiarsk Krai took 25 days to make its journey.[295] The Soviet authorities themselves admitted that the NKVD officials in charge of the train echelons frequently ignored the

290 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 214.
291 Ida Bender, trans. Laurel Anderson, Carl Anderson and William Wiest, *The Dark Abyss Of Exile: The Story of Survival*. Fargo, ND: Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University Libraries, 2000, p. 22.
292 Milova vol. II, doc. 49, pp. 153–158.
293 Bender, p. 26.
294 G.A. Vol'ter, *Zona polnogo pokia: Rossiiskie nemtsy v gody voiny i poslee nee: Svidetel'stva ocheviedetsev* Moscow: LA "Varig", 1998. p. 64.
295 Milova, vol. II, doc. 50, pp. 159–161.

instructions requiring them to feed the German deportees.[296] Lack of food and water was a real problem during transit. Often the deportees were unable to pack sufficient food and spoilage in the overcrowded train wagons ruined much of what they did manage to bring with them.[297] The transportation from the Volga and other regions to Siberia and Kazakhstan had already inflicted hunger and disease upon the deportees even before they arrived.

296 Milova, vol. II, doc. 57, pp. 218–219.
297 Bender, pp. 26–27.

# 7 Arrival in Exile in Siberia and Kazakhstan

The deported Germans were sent in roughly equal numbers to Kazakhstan and Siberia. The number of deported Germans arriving in Kazakhstan by 25 November 1941 was 310,195. In contrast the Siberian territories of Altai Krai, Krasnoiarsk Krai, Omsk Oblast, and Novosibirsk Oblast received 383,681 German deportees. The greatest number of Germans deported to Siberia ended up in Novosibirsk, 138,308.[298] The material living conditions in Siberia and Kazakhstan for the newly arriving German special settlers were far below the quality needed to maintain the population's health. They lacked sufficient food, warm clothing, proper shelter, and medicine. Poor hygiene, malnutrition, and exposure led to significant excess morbidity and premature mortality. The German deportees found themselves dumped in areas where all of life's necessities suffered severe shortages and they were near the bottom of the hierarchy for the distribution of food and goods. Indeed many of the deportees received no food from official sources until an 11 November 1941 decree by the People's Commissariat of Procurement ordered that adult deportees capable of physical labor on the kolkhozes be issued 300 kg of grain each in exchange for vouchers issued for abandoned grain. Given the large number of children among the deportees, not to mention former urban dwellers and invalids this meant that the actual amount of grain authorized to be issued per a person in practice was much less. But, even the bare minimum of the order was not fully honored by local Soviet authorities.[299] So severe hunger among the German deportees persisted into 1942 and beyond.

Other regions of the USSR received few German deportees at this time. The Stalin regime appears to have deported a small number of Germans living in Belorussia to Uzbekistan where they

298 GARF F. R-9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 204.
299 Milova, vol. II, doc. 61, pp. 227–230.

worked on cotton farms.[300] But, the German population of Belorussia was small, only 8,448 in 1939.[301] The NKVD also deported a number of Germans from Moscow and Moscow Oblast to Uzbekistan. Echelon 1072 arriving on 27 September 1941 brought 2,769 Germans from the capital region to Uzbekistan. These deportees were settled in Kirov Raion, Tashkent Oblast.[302] This district was in the northern part of Tashkent Oblast near the Kazakh border.[303] The number of Germans deported as special settlers to Uzbekistan is impossible to determine. On 1 January 1953 the MVD recorded a total of 1,451 deported Germans in Uzbekistan.[304] The origin of the deportees is not specified.

The largest number of Germans deported in 1941 from European areas of the USSR ended up in Siberia. Most of them were rural Germans sent to the western Siberian regions of Altai Krai and Omsk and Novosibirsk oblasts. Volga Germans more so than Germans from other regions were more likely to be sent to Siberia whereas most deported Germans from outside the Volga region ended up in Kazakhstan. Upon arriving at their destinations representatives of local kolkhozes came to the train stations to select the German deportees for labor.[305] Intellectuals and single women with children were considered the least desirable workers and ended up on the poorest kolkhozes.[306] Urban Germans with no experience working in agriculture were particularly difficult to integrate into the kolkhoz economy. In most areas of special settlement between 10%–15% of the German deportees were ur-

300 Interview with Liubov' Grigor'evna Gerzekorn in Ivanovka on 5 December, 2010.
301 Bugai 1998, doc. 1, pp. 17–18.
302 A. A. German, "Deportatsiia nemtsev iz Moskvy I Moskovskoi Oblast" in German A.A. and Silantjewa, O. Ju. (eds)., *'Vyselit' s treskom'. Ochevidsty i issledovaniia o tragedii rossisskikh nemtsev/'Fortjagen muss man sie'. Zeitungen und Forscher berichten uber die Tragodie der Russlanddeutschen.* Moscow: MSNK Press, 2011, table 2, p. 205.
303 German, "Deportatsiia nemtsev iz Moskvy i Moskovskoi Oblast," p. 207.
304 Zemskov 2005, p. 213.
305 Vol'ter, pp. 66–67.
306 Vol'ter, p. 68.

ban.[307] In Novosibirsk Oblast it was slightly higher at 15%–20%.[308] But, in Krasnoiarsk Krai it was a significant majority of the German deportees at 60%.[309] These deportees proved the most difficult to incorporate into the kolkhozes and provide with food in exchange for labor days.

The region of Altai Krai received nearly 100,000 German deportees. Yet the local authorities had only managed to adequately prepare 10,202 houses capable of housing 34,586 people.[310] On 10 December 1941, an NKVD report from Pankrushkikh Raion in Altai Krai reported the arrival of 1,880 Volga German deportees. This contingent consisted of 936 children, 537 adult women, and 407 adult men.[311] A recount and verification of these deportees in November 1941 to ensure that all of them were in their assigned kolkhozes had discovered that two families had moved without authorization to other kolkhozes where they had relatives. But, none had fled from the district as of yet. Passportization was to have been completed by 1 December 1941 but, could not be finished due to a lack of film to take photographs. They had only managed to issue 248 passports and still had 740 left to complete.[312] Film like everything else was in short supply in Altai Krai during the war.

A 31 December 1941 report to Major Ivanov from the UNKVD leadership in Novosibirsk Oblast noted problems with the supply of bread, vegetables, and livestock to German deportees from the Volga, Krasnodar, and other regions. The 11 November 1941 decision to issue 300 kg of grain to each individual capable of working in exchange for vouchers received in exchange for abandoned grain had failed to solve the hunger problem among the deportees. The problem was especially acute for urban deportees that had no vouchers for grain and those with large numbers of

307 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. No. 88, p. 326.
308 Milova, vol. II, doc. 61, pp. 227–230.
309 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 88, p. 326.
310 N.F. Bugai, "40-e gody: 'Avtonomiiu nemtsev povolzhia likidirovat'," *Istoriia SSSR,* no. 2, 1991, p. 175.
311 GARF F. R-9479, O. 1, D. 85, ll. 232.
312 GARF F. R-9479, O. 1, D. 85. l. 233.

children too young to work who received no separate rations. Some 15%–20% of the German deportees in Novosibirsk Oblast had not worked on kolkhozes prior to deportation and thus had no vouchers to exchange. They also had no agricultural skills and thus could not earn labor days on kolkhozes in Novosibirsk to exchange for food. In many cases these deportees received no food. In other cases they received one kilogram of grain per family regardless of its size. Even those with vouchers, however, often went hungry. The local authorities frequently refused to honor the vouchers and even when they did they were limited to 300 kg of grain per family and could not be used to acquire bread, potatoes, vegetables, or meat.[313] The problems of urban German deportees that constituted up to a fifth of the deportees in Novosibirsk Oblast was even worse in Krasnoiarsk Krai where they were an even larger percentage.

Most of the Germans resettled to Siberia were deported to the southern regions of western Siberia. But, 75,000 including most urban Germans from the Volga German ASSR were scheduled for deportation to Krasnoiarsk Krai in eastern Siberia. An NKVD report of 5 November 1941 noted that 60% of these deportees were urban dwellers.[314] By 25 November 1941 a total of 77,259 had actually arrived in this region.[315] On 19 November 1941, five echelons arrived in Krasnoiarsk. They were echelon No. 831 with 2,500 deportees, echelon No. 840 with 2,440, echelon No. 829 with 2,277, echelon No. 839 with 2,295, and echelon No. 841 with 2,432.[316] A report from the UNKVD in Minusinsk on 16 December 1941 noted the difficulties in integrating these urban Germans into the rural economy of the region. The city and district of Minusinsk received 620 families consisting of 2,337 Volga Germans mostly from the city of Engels on 18 September 1941. They arrived by steam ship. Only 87 of these families came from kolkhozes and the rest were families of former workers in institutions

313 Milova, vol. II, doc. 61, pp. 227–230.
314 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 88, p. 326.
315 GARF F. R-9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 204.
316 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 117.

and enterprises in Engels. In total the cohort consisted of 535 adult men, 799 adult women, and 1003 children. The vast majority of this predominantly urban population were settled on farms to perform unfamiliar agricultural work. A total of 400 families were initially assigned to kolkhozes, 50 to sovkhozes, 49 to machine tractor stations and feeding stations, and only 121 to institutions and enterprises in the city of Minusinsk.[317] Thus a population of mostly urban professionals and skilled factory workers from Engels found themselves forced to do menial agricultural labor on the kolkhozes in Minusinsk district.

The region suffered from a lack of unoccupied housing stock for the German deportees. Most of them had to share already compactly settled houses with the local population. Only a small portion could be settled in uninhabited houses. Most of the previously existing free housing had been taken up by the earlier deportation of 200 Polish families to the district. Upon their arrival and distribution to various villages in the district the German deportees in Miniusinsk Raion were registered. Copies of this list were kept both with the UNKVD special settlement section in Krasnoiarsk City and the local section of the NKVD. Another copy was lodged with the executive committee of the raion soviet. At this point the authorities stated an intention to issue internal passports to all the deportees in the district during October 1941. The report further noted that there had already been cases of the German deportees fleeing from the district as well as other unauthorized movement including travel to the city of Abakan and back.The report finally noted that they had not completed plans for building more housing for the deportees.[318] Lack of housing for the German deportees would be a long lasting problem throughout the war and beyond.

The report on the German deportees arriving in Miniusinsk Raion prompted a response by NKVD Chief of the Special Settlements, Major Ivanov. He first inquired about their employment,

317 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 85, l. 228.
318 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 85, l. 228–228 ob.

especially the women on kolkhozes, sovkhozes, in factories, and institutions. He noted that people desperate to acquire food were susceptible to proposals of sabotage. He further noted the majority of women among the German deportees in the district did not have work and needed food. He then requested that the list of deportees be given to the representative for evacuation to Krasnoiarsk Krai and that it be noted in their internal passports that they had the right to live in the district. He then issued instructions to investigate the German deportees thoroughly to expose and liquidate "fascist" agents. Also he asked that they take measures to prevent escapes by the deportees. Finally, he asked that he be kept informed on anything dealing the above issues as well as the political attitudes of the deportees.[319] Ivanov's relentless focus on unmasking and eliminating "fascist agents" among the German deportees is a recurring theme in almost all of his correspondence on the subject.

A similar report from 17 December 1941 from Kansk Raion in Krasnoiarsk Krai was sent by the local NKVD chief to Major Ivanov. This report noted that 1500 German deportees from the city of Engels had arrived in the district and all of them had been settled on kolkhozes in specially repaired buildings. This had been met with a negative reaction since the majority of them had never done agricultural work before. Out of the deportees 527 were children, 304 were urban housewives, 263 were white collar workers from various institutions, 189 were blue collar workers from various urban enterprises, 212 were members of the intelligentsia including doctors, teachers, actors, and others, 3 were former officials, and only 2 had ever lived in a village before. Thus a portion of the qualified factory workers, book keepers, doctors and others were moved to the city of Kansk. But, the remainder stayed in the villages in large part because the city lacked housing to put the deportees.[320] More so than any other region receiving large numbers of German deportees, Krasnoiarsk Krai found itself

319 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 85, ll. 229–229 ob.
320 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 85, l. 230.

burdened with a large number of former urban dwellers that could not easily be integrated into the kolkhoz system.

This report like others on German deportees to Siberia and Kazakhstan noted the unauthorized movement from village to village and even from district to district of the special settlers in search of work. The problem of settling urban dwellers on kolkhozes was especially difficult since the former city residents had no desire to live in rural areas and wanted to leave. The deportees that remained in the villages had no vegetables, bread, or meat. Those assigned to work on sovkhozes had all earlier received their advances and did not receive any bread provisions for the winter. Their passports had been exchanged for ones with special marks noting their status as special settlers. The NKVD in its settlement of the deportees in the district had discovered that there were a number of families of German women with Russian husbands in the Red Army. These women needed to be removed from the villages to Kansk City. There were also a number of cases of adolescents in grades 3–4 that demanded to be allowed to leave for Omsk, Tomsk, or Novosibirsk to complete their studies. The Kansk authorities had no instructions for dealing with this problem and had taken no decision other than to prohibit them from leaving the raion.[321] The movement restrictions imposed upon German special settlers and their settlement in remote areas seriously disrupted the education of a very large portion of those deported as children or adolescents. Many of them never managed to even complete a basic primary school education.

Ivanov responded to this report on 30 December 1941. He judged the work of the Kansk NKVD officials to be unsatisfactory with regards to the deported Germans. His first complaint was their inability to track the movement and current whereabouts of all the deportees. He noted that there were a large number of "fascist agents" among the deportees and allowing them to flee their assigned places of settlement could allow them to organize "counterrevolutionary" elements. He ordered that all measures be

321 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 85, l. 230 ob.

taken to ensure that the count of who and where the German deportees were was systematic, exact, and again verified. He then tackled the question of leaving the raion for education. He noted that this was not to be allowed until after the war was over and in the meantime these adolescents were to be compelled to work on kolkhozes, sovkhozes, as well as in enterprises, and institutions in the district. He then noted that unregistered movement by the deportees from one place to another needed to be categorically stopped. All movement by the German deportees needed to be approved by the district executive and the local NKVD informed. Next he noted that if the city soviet of Kansk could not provide living quarters for the urban German deportees then the enterprises and institutions for which they worked had to be allowed to find them apartments if they needed them. But, in all such cases the local NKVD had to be provided with this information. It ended with an order that the Kansk NKVD diligently report on all aspects on progress towards providing the German deportees with work so they could feed themselves as well as their political attitudes.[322] Control over the movement and location of all the German deportees was along with finding and liquidating "fascist agents" a constant concern of Major Ivanov. He consistently wanted recounts and verification of the location of the entire population in each district.

The massive resettlement of Germans from western regions of the USSR had largely been completed by the end of November 1941. By 25 November 1941 the various Soviet decrees deporting Germans eastward applied to 868,588 people of which 693,876 had been relocated. Kazakhstan accounted for about half of both these numbers. The Soviet government had allocated 467,600 Germans (53.8%) to Kazakhstan by this time of which 310,195 (44.7%) had actually been resettled in Kazakhstan.[323] This massive influx of German deportees into Kazakhstan from western regions of the USSR took less than three months.

322 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 85, l. 231–231 ob.
323 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 83, l. 204.

The Germans sent to Kazakhstan had few possessions with them when they arrived. The Crimean Germans were the worst off having only been allowed to take 50 kg of baggage each. Those that arrived in North Kazakhstan Oblast had no food and no suitable winter clothes that would allow them to work on their assigned kolkhozes. The Crimean Germans in North Kazakhstan took to wandering from kolkhoz to kolkhoz begging for food.[324] The Soviet regime would take extreme measures to counter this unauthorized movement. In essence they instituted a form of modern serfdom upon the special settlers to tie them to their assigned settlements.

On 14 and 15 October 1941 echelons of German deportees began to arrive in Kazakhstan. These included Echelon 401 arriving in Tonkiris Station Akmola Oblast carrying 2,202 people of which 487 were adult men, 748 adult women and 964 children. On the way to Kazakhstan the NKVD had recorded two deaths, three births, and five left behind. These deportees were distributed to 13 kolkhozes in Akmola Raion. Echelon 404 arrived at Mamliutka Station North Kazakhstan Oblast with 2,077 people. A full 70% of the deportees from this echelon were settled in Mamliutsk Raion. Finally, Echelon 476 arrived at Martuk Station in Aktiubinsk Oblast with 1,983 people. Among these deportees were two children with abdominal typhus and three with scarlet fever. They were transferred to a hospital and the passengers of two train wagons were placed in isolation for 14 days of quarantine. The deportees from this echelon were settled in Martuk Raion.[325] The ratio of adult men to women and children remained low in all of the deportation echelons due to a number of men having already been mobilized into the labor army either directly or after being discharged from the armed forces and arrests both during the deportation and even more so during 1937–1938. Illnesses in transit due to the unhygienic conditions of the train cars afflicted children much more than adults.

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324 Milova, vol. II, doc. 62, p. 234.
325 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, ll. 79–80.

The ad hoc adaptation of the special settlement system for deported nationalities began in the early stages of the German deportation. Already on 28 August 1941, NKVD chief Lavrentry Beria issued Prikaz 000160 "On Organizing the Special Settlement Section of the NKVD USSR".[326] The special settlement section of the NKVD controlled the residency, movement, and employment of the deportees. In particular the NKVD sought to permanently confine the special settlers to their assigned villages. Special settlers had to carry special ID cards that restricted them to living in a single assigned village.[327] A letter by Chief of the NKVD Special Settlement Section, Ivan Ivanov on 8 December 1941 to the NKVD authorities in North Kazakhstan emphasized this policy.

> It should be clear to you that German—resettlers in North Kazakhstan Oblast, of which Paludensk raion is a part, are resettled permanently. They will not be returning to their old places of residence. Therefore our task is to quickly provide work and housing accommodations for the German-resettlers in their new places of residence, i.e. the population points, where they were resettled.[328]

The movement restrictions on German special settlers imposed on 28 August 1941 proved hard to enforce and the NKVD leadership issued numerous demands that the local NKVD authorities in Kazakhstan and Siberia exert greater vigilance over the deportees. On 12 January 1942, the NKVD in Paludensk Raion received instructions to strengthen their enforcement of the movement restrictions on the German special settlers. The instructions further called for the arrest and prosecution of the deportees violating these restrictions using the existing Soviet passport legislation. Finally, the instructions requested that the raion NKVD work more vigorously to eliminate "fascist agents" and prevent escapes among the German special settlers.[329] Subsequent decrees reinforced these restrictions on the special settlers.

326 Bruhl 1995, vol. ll, p. 107.
327 Photograph of document in German, et al., plate 4.
328 Milova, vol. ll, doc. 63, pp. 237–239. The underlining is in the original.
329 Milova, 1995, vol. ii, doc. 63, pp. 237–239.

The German deportees arriving in Kazakhstan in fall 1941 presented the NKVD with several problems. The first was registering them and issuing them documentation with a view to preventing them from moving from their newly assigned places of residence. The experience of the 2,199 Germans deported from Moscow to Kazalinsk Raion, Kyzyl Orda Oblast is typical. Upon arrival at the Kazalinsk train station the NKVD established lists of deportees for each train wagon as they were unloaded. Then the NKVD established lists for each kolkhoz receiving the resettlers. Finally, after settling them on kolkhozes the NKVD reregistered all the deportees in the district. The NKVD settled the 578 deported households on 12 kolkhozes and in the city of Kyzyl Orda. These kolkhozes were spread out over 80 kilometers. In order to attach them to these kolkhozes and prevent their escape the Soviet authorities sought to issue all of these deportees with passports marked with stamps stating, "Has the right to reside only in Kazalinsk Raion." The task of issuing passports with such stamps to all the deported Germans in Kazalinsk Raion was to be finished by 7 October 1942. People with such stamps in their passports could not purchase rail tickets. Despite these efforts already by 31 December 1941 a number of the German deportees in Kazalinsk Raion had fled. To prevent further escapes and find those fugitives that had already fled the NKVD mobilized agents among the deported Germans.[330] The settlement of Germans in Kazalinsk and other areas of Kazakhstan was to be permanent. A letter of 13 January 1942 from chief of the special settlement section of the NKVD, Ivanov to the head of the Kazalinsk Raion NKVD noted, "It is necessary for you through party-soviet organs to explain to and strongly warn all Germans that they are resettled forever and that they will not be returning to their old places of residence." To this end the local NKVD forces were to strengthen the attachment of the German deportees to their new places of settlement and work, on kolkhozes in the raion. The deportees could not leave these new areas of settlement without special NKVD permis-

330 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 275.

sion.[331] The first task of the local NKVD was to make sure that the Germans sent to kolkhozes in Kazalinsk Raion remained confined to these farms and could not move off of them.

The second task of the NKVD regarding the special settlers was to assign the German deportees to work on the kolkhozes. In Kazalinsk Raion this included the building of canals for irrigation in addition to sowing and harvesting crops. According to the NKVD, however, many of the deported Germans took a negative attitude towards their exile and work assignments. They thought that their resettlement was only temporary and that they would return to their previous homes after the war. To this end there were instances of indiscipline, a lack of desire to work, and talk about how they would sit out the war by the German deportees.[332] This indiscipline and refusal to work with the local kolkhoz inhabitants led to bad relations between the two groups. The locals viewed the Germans solely as a source of labor. The tensions between the Germans and locals even resulted in physical fights.[333] The deported Germans naturally resented being uprooted from their homelands and exiled to Kazakhstan and initially found it difficult to integrate themselves with the indigenous population.

The NKVD settled the deported Germans sent to Kazalinsk Raion in houses on kolkhozes that had already received deported Koreans in 1937 from the Soviet Far East Krai. Those houses that had been vacated by the Koreans became the domiciles of the Germans. The Soviet authorities repaired these houses after the Koreans left. But, they did not engage in any large scale new construction to house the newly arrived Germans.[334] On 13 January 1942 the chief of the NKVD Section on Special Settlement informed the local NKVD head in Kazalinsk Raion that it was necessary to incorporate the deported Germans into the kolkhozes and provide them with housing and kitchen gardens.[335] The poor

331 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 276.
332 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 275.
333 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 275 ob.
334 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 275 ob.
335 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 276.

material conditions of the German special settlers in large part resulted from not being fully integrated into the kolkhoz system. They did not have equal access with other kolkhoz dwellers to labor days and the produce they could acquire, housing, and perhaps most importantly privately cultivated plots of land (kitchen gardens) on which to grow potatoes and vegetables and raise chickens and livestock.

Aside from housing, the material conditions of the German deportees in Kazalinsk Raion remained inadequate through 1941. In particular they suffered from a lack of food. There still had been no efforts made by 31 December 1941 to provide the deported Germans with compensation for any of the cattle, grain, and other goods left behind in their original places of settlement for which they had been issued vouchers.[336] The amount of private and particularly collective property confiscated by the Soviet state from the deported Germans is impossible to calculate. But, it was certainly considerable and the food Germans deported from the Volga and other regions to Kazakhstan were forced to abandon could have certainly fed them adequately if it had been compensated in kind.

Almost immediately after the deportations Kazakhstan faced an extreme housing shortage due to the large influx of German special settlers. Some regions of Kazakhstan began to experience a lack of housing within weeks after the deportations started. In South Kazakhstan Oblast the arrival of 14,017 deported Germans had exhausted all empty housing including vacant rooms in already occupied houses by 12 September 1941. After this date local authorities began housing the German deportees in earth huts.[337] Other areas of Kazakhstan also quickly ran out of available housing for the arriving German deportees.

Much of the available housing needed significant repair before it could be fit for human habitation. Already on 1 October 1941, the NKVD reported that deported Germans in Kustanai

336 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 275 ob.
337 Karpykova, doc.45, pp. 97–98.

Oblast had been placed in sectioned houses already occupied by local kolkhoz workers and their families. Most of these buildings needed repairs, but shortages of building supplies prevented the necessary work from being done.[338] Local authorities soon began housing Germans in already occupied kolkhoz quarters in other regions of Kazakhstan as well. The deported Germans thus found themselves living in extremely compact and crowded conditions with local Kazakhs.

A report from Presnogor'kovka Raion, Kustanai Oblast of 10 December 1941 by the NKVD Raion Section Commander Rudenko on the 1,744 German special settlers deported there elaborated on these and other problems. These deportees arrived in the district on 24 November 1941. The vast majority of these arrivals were women 515 and children 748. Adult men comprised only 480 of the deportees. A total of 449 families were distributed among 15 population centers in the district. Like in other cases the NKVD in Presnogor'kovka had difficulty in housing and incorporating the German deportees into kolkhoz work. In particular the housing available lacked windows and a lack of glass prevented their repair. A number could not work due to a lack of warm clothes.[339] A response by Ivanov on 28 December 1941 asked how many of the deportees they had managed to employ and how many of those employed were women. Ivanonv speculated that the lack of work among the German deportees would cause them to consider sabotage out of desperation due to a lack of food. He further inquired about whether the deportees had been able to receive grain, fodder, and livestock left behind during the deportation in exchange for vouchers and acts. Finally, as always Ivanov stressed the need to systematically recount and verify the count of the German deportees and to diligently unmask and liquidate "fascist agents" among them as well as prevent their escape from the district.[340] These themes would be repeatedly emphasized in reports

338 A. Shtraus and S. Pankrats, eds. *Svidetel'stva prestuplenii.* Bishkek: Ilim, 1997, p. 151.
339 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 281.
340 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 283–283 ob.

to Ivanov by various RO NKVD chiefs in Kazakhstan and his answers to all of them was remarkably similar.

The housing crises for the arriving German deportees did not remain localized. Instead it affected the entirety of Kazakhstan. A 2 October 1941 NKVD report noted that Kazakhstan had received 132,610 deported Germans since early September but, only had 7,266 available houses to accommodate them on kolkhozes and sovkhozes. In order to properly house all of the more than 415,600 Germans the Soviet government planned to resettle in Kazakhstan would require the construction of 100,000 additional houses. Kazakhstan, however, suffered severe shortages of construction material. The republic only had 6,000 cubic meters of lumber, 100 tons of nails, and 23,000 tons of window glass available. Out of the 12 oblasts in Kazakhstan receiving deported Germans only the six in the north east had a small possibility of obtaining any lumber from local sources. There was no possibility in the remaining six oblasts. Building 100,000 houses would require another 800,000 cubic meters of lumber, 1 million tons of nails, and 700,000 cubic meters of window glass.[341] Due to the inability of the local Kazakh authorities to carry out this construction, the Soviet government authorized loans of 2,000 rubles at 3% interest to German special settlers to build or repair their own houses. These loans had to be paid back in full in five years and the first payment was due the second year.[342] In the meantime the vast majority of the German exiles in Kazakhstan found themselves housed in buildings already inhabited by Kazakhs.

In other parts of northern Kazakhstan the NKVD also reported housing German deportees under compact conditions in the already occupied houses of kolkhoz workers. On 1 November 1941, the NKVD reported that out of 21,146 Germans arriving in Pavlodar Oblast that only 4,190 had been accommodated in unoccupied houses. They settled another 3,150 on sovkhozes and

341 Karpykova, doc. 49, pp. 101–102.
342 Karpykova, doc. 51, pp. 105–106.

13,800 in the already inhabited houses of kolkhoz workers.[343] Thus a full 65.26% of the German deportees in Pavlodar Oblast lived in overcrowded kolkhoz quarters with local residents.

Pavlodar Oblast received a total of 37,703 German deportees during 1941.[344] The bulk of these deportee had arrived by rail in the city of Pavlodar during early November. From 29 October to 14 November 1941, a total of 13 echelons with 610 wagons had delivered 30,169 German deportees to this city.[345] These resettled Germans were settled on various kolkhozes and sovkhozes. By 1943 there were over 20 kolkhozes in the oblast where Germans formed the majority of the population.[346] The Germans arriving in Pavlodar Oblast had previously resided in the Volga German ASSR, Stalingrad Oblast, Kuibyshev Oblast, Crimea, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Krasnodar Krai, and Stavropol Krai.[347] Many of the Germans from Georgia and Crimea were completely unprepared for the harsh life that was to greet them in Pavlodar Oblast.

The situation for German deportees arriving in Bayan-Aul Raion in Pavlodar Oblast was especially grim. A special NKVD report written on 7 December 1941 gave an especially dire description of the material conditions of Germans from Georgia. The NKVD had settled 263 households with 910 special settlers on six kolkhozes. Out of these 263 households 133 did not have vouchers for any of the agricultural produce left behind in the Caucasus for forcibly abandoned grain, maize, potatoes, livestock, wine, brandy, and other goods. Because they had no vouchers to exchange for food they had already by this time been without bread for three days. The vouchers for 50 of these families were in the hands of the former kolkhoz chairman of Kirov Kolkhoz in Luxemburg Raion, Georgian SSR, Heinrich Reiser who remained in Kaganovich Raion.[348] Here can be seen already the failure of the

343 Bugai 1992, doc. 34, pp. 66–67.
344 Iu. I. Podoprigora, *Nemtsy Pavlodarskogo Priitrysh'ia.* Almaty: Biz Bibliothek, 2010, p. 49
345 Podoprigora, pp. 49–50.
346 Podoprigora, p. 51.
347 Podoprigora, pp. 52–53.
348 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 284.

voucher system as a means of compensating the German deportees for forcibly abandoned property.

The lack of food greatly weakened the immune systems of the deportees and made them vulnerable to various diseases. The damage caused by these diseases was in turn greatly exacerbated by the starvation conditions the deportees faced. Already 80 deportees in Bayan-Aul had become ill with measles and influenza. The measles epidemic hit children especially hard as a result of insufficient nutrition and 30 had to be hospitalized. Many others could not be rendered any medical care at all and 20 people, mostly children had already perished from these causes.[349] The mass morbidity and mortality of deportees especially children due to contagious diseases and malnutrition led to deaths outnumbering births among Germans in the USSR for seven years from 1941–1948.

In addition to a lack of vouchers for food left behind in Georgia the main cause for the famine like conditions of the German special settlers in the district was the fact that they had not been assigned any work on the kolkhozes and thus could not earn any work days. They thus remained without produce or bread. The kolkhoz authorities expressed little care for the survival of the German deportees. For instance the Chairman of Kolkhoz October 7 had expelled 18 German special settlers to an old farm 7–8 kilometers from the kolkhoz. Among them was a woman married to a Red Army soldier and her child. There they lived in two small and dilapidated huts without fuel or food. The report noted that if these deportees did not receive any food in the next two to three days they would all be dead from hunger.[350] In a number of cases the lack of food faced by the German deportees was so dire that they faced literal famine conditions.

In the kolkhozes Stalin and Molotov in Bayan-Aul the German deportees also remained completely without food and had to trade their bedding including pillows and blankets for produce.

349 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 284.
350 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 284.

On none of the six kolkhozes did any of the deportees have access to soap for two to three months. The report concluded with a reiteration of the dire food situation of the deportees and the fact that they would start to die in large numbers in a mere two to three days if immediate measures to feed them were not taken.[351] The barter of bedding and other goods brought into exile by the German deportees was a common means of obtaining food for survival. This was especially true of Germans from the Caucasus whose goods were deemed more valuable by the locals in Kazakhstan.

The authorities also placed German deportees into already occupied kolkhoz houses in southern Kazakhstan. The NKVD reported on 5 November 1941 that they had accommodated all 33,000 of the resettled Germans arriving in Jambul Oblasts in sectioned houses. Almost all of the German deportees in Jambul Oblast were settled on Kazakh auls rather than Russian or Ukrainian kolkhozes despite an expressed desire by many to live with the latter. The primary reason for this desire was the fact that few rural Kazakhs at this time could speak Russian and many of the Germans arriving in Jambul at the time, particularly urban dwellers from Krasnodar had a good command of the language.[352] Living in the same overcrowded houses with no common language led to the development of negative relations between the newly arriving Germans and the already resident Kazakhs.[353] Looking at the existing evidence it is clear these negative relations are primarily the result of Kazakh animosity.

Also in Jambul Oblast some 2,000 Germans originally from Crimea like those in Bayan-Aul from Georgia lacked any vouchers for livestock, grain, and other goods. They thus could not redeem them for grain and animals in Kazakhstan to feed themselves.[354] The hasty forced evacuation from Crimea to Ordzhonikidze Krai in August 1941 before their final deportation to Kazakhstan in

351 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 284 ob.
352 Bugai 1992, doc. 36, pp. 67–68.
353 German et al., p. 438.
354 Milova, vol. II, doc. No. 56, p. 215.

October 1941 had left them without documentation of their personal and collective property in the Crimean ASSR.

A number of Soviet documents comment on Kazakh hostility towards the German deportees. For instance many times Kazakhs would leave their villages and go to live with family and clan members elsewhere rather than live in the same vicinity as Germans. As early as 5 November 1941, the head of the special settlement section of the NKVD, Ivanov reported to Merkulov and Chernyshov the two men immediately under Beria about such problems. The report also noted that Kazakhs would not allow dead German children to be buried in existing kolkhoz cemeteries. In particular the report notes the discrimination against Germans by Kazakhs in the Orken kolkhoz in Kokchetaev Raion, North Kazakh Oblast.[355] The Soviet regime of course favored the titular and thus legally privileged Kazakhs over the dispossessed German special settlers. This led one of the deported Germans to note, "According to the basic law—the Stalin Constitution as they say, all nations are equal, but in fact everything is controlled by Russians and Kazakhs, and the remaining nations are oppressed by them."[356] The special settlement system with its application to the vast majority of Germans in the USSR and later to a number of smaller whole nationalities created several million second class Soviet citizens defined by natsional'nost'.

Besides being crowded much of the housing for Germans in Jambul Oblast needed serious repair. A full 30% of this housing had no glass in their windows or doors that worked properly.[357] Thus the newly arriving deportees found themselves largely unprotected from the elements. The NKVD reported similar housing situations for German deportees in other oblasts of Kazakhstan as well.

Plans to settle the German deportees sent to Semipalatinsk Oblast in empty houses soon broke down as well. The NKVD reported on 7 November 1941 that out of a planned 47,500 depor-

355 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 88, p. 326.
356 Zemskov 2005, p. 128.
357 Milova, vol. II, doc. 57, pp. 217.

tees that 41,194 had arrived in the territory. Only the first 15,000 of them could be placed in empty houses. The remaining 26,194 Germans or 63.59% of the total ended up living in the same houses as local kolkhoz dwellers.[358] The accommodation of German deportees in sections of already inhabited houses became a standard practice in Kazakhstan. It also prevailed in Siberia.

One of the raions in Semipalatinsk Oblast that was a destination for deported Germans was Ayaguz. A letter from V. Inogradov the Chief of Ayaguz Raion Section of the NKVD, Lt. of State Security of 22 December 1941 to Chief of the Section of Special Settlement of the NKVD USSR Ivanov, Major of State Security detailed the conditions of the German deportees. The Ayaguz Raion, located in Semipalatinsk Oblast, Kazakhstan received 2,834 deported Germans in 1941. The NKVD settled these internal exiles on two sovkhozes and 34 kolkhozes. The raion was almost entirely inhabited by Kazakhs and had only one Russian village. It was also geographically huge spanning nearly 31,000 square kilometers. The various Kazakh auls laid a distance of between 30 and 180 kilometers from the district center. There had been no plans made to accommodate these deportees. As a result the district was completely unprepared for this influx. They in fact had not even set aside a single kolkhoz to house them before they started arriving. Only in October did they have any type of plans on how to settle any of the German deportees arriving in the district. At this time, however, it was only possible to house the Germans in already overcrowded kolkhozes. There was no empty housing stock on the auls in the district. It was thus necessary to arrange for the construction of dug outs and huts by hand to house the resettled Germans. But, the district had absolutely no wood or other construction materials other than earth to make adobe bricks. There were also no plans to ship any such materials to the district from other oblasts for the entire year. Because of this it was planned that in the summer of 1942 each of the designated kolkhozes would build dug outs to provide housing for 10 to 20 German

358 Bugai 1992, doc. 39, p. 70.

families in sections of each of these collective farms.[359] The district was clearly unable to provide adequate housing for the re-settled Germans.

The problem of assigning the German deportees sent to Ayaguz Raion to work on the kolkhozes suffered from a number of problems. The first was that the auls converted to kolkhozes were not well suited to field agriculture. Rather the former inhabitants up until 1933 had been nomads. Up until their forced resettlement they had an almost completely pastoral economy based upon livestock. As a result the collective farms had no kind of vegetable cultivation and only a limited harvest of wheat in 1941.[360] Because of this all of the field work on these kolkhozes had been completed before the German deportees arrived and there was no work to assign them until winter except preparing fuel and engaging in small handicrafts.[361] At the time of the report those German deportees physically capable of manual labor were employed in transporting livestock to the feeding lots. A significant number of the re-settlers could not work due to a lack of warm clothes and shoes. A lack of young adult men among the German deportees was another problem. Most of the deported families were headed by women. The total number of men that came into the district was only 190 out of 2,834 and all of these were old men or adolescents. This was because at the time of the deportation all of the men had already been taken away, arrested, or mobilized for work in the rear. This absence of men also meant that among the German deportees in the district that there were no highly skilled specialists. But, rather only kolkhoz workers.[362] Providing work on the kolkhozes to the deportees to allow them to earn labor days thus proved difficult. The kolkhozes lacked work to assign them and the special settlers had few people that could physically perform the work that was available.

359 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 277.
360 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 277.
361 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, ll. 277–277 ob.
362 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 277 ob.

The local NKVD authorities had counted the deportees upon their arrival at the rail station in the district. A recount to verify the number of family heads and dependents then was done when they were moved to the kolkhozes. They then undertook a second recount in late December in connection to issuing passports to the deportees with appropriate residency restrictions. In the case of flight from the district deportees would not be included in the second recount. The work on registering all deportees in the district in the recount would not be completed until 1 January 1942 because of the huge distance between the settlers.[363] The consistent recounting of deportees to catch any unauthorized movements by the re-settlers was a primary pillar of the special settlement regime.

To further assist in the prevention of unauthorized movement and escapes by the deportees the NKVD took additional measures. These included using the railroad police to carefully control the sale of train tickets. The police required passport checks in order to purchase rail tickets and this prevented the deportees from buying them. The NKVD also controlled the renting of houses and apartments in local cities through the local apartment committees and housing directorates to prevent German deportees from moving to these urban areas. Finally, they established both overt and covert surveillance over the deportees.[364] These measures sought to tie the desperately poor German special settlers to the bleak kolkhozes the NKVD had assigned them.

On 31 December 1941, Ivanov responded to Inogradov's letter. It started by asking how the Germans in the district could physically survive if there was no work to provide them and if it was possible they could be issued grain in exchange for vouchers. He then exhorted Inogradov to continue his work at registering the German re-settlers and unmasking and liquidating "fascist agents" among them as well as preventing them from escaping.

363 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 277 ob.
364 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 277, ob.

Ivanov concluded his letter with a request that he be provided with all information touching on the German special settlers' political views, labor arrangements, and deaths including exact counts and causes.[365] Again Ivanov's primary concerns were keeping the deportees from escaping, using them as a labor source, and uprooting "fascist agents" from among their ranks.

Another large district in Kazakhstan to receive many German deportees was Osokarovsk Raion in Karaganda Oblast. A report from 18 December 1941 by the Chief of the Raion Section of the NKVD, Lt. Mikhalev detailed the arrival of 6,298 urban German deportees from Moscow and Baku to the district. The loading of the deportees and their property onto the train echelons had been done extremely rapidly and poorly. This resulted in the mass division of families and loss of property. In many cases half of a family and part of their baggage would be sent to one oblast and the other half sent to another one. The NKVD was still receiving daily complaints searching for lost fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. During the deportation itself there were no reported cases of flight and only one person was left behind in Cheliabinsk. This person quickly rejoined his family in exile. The urban nature of this contingent was a problem regarding assigning them employment. They were overwhelmingly intellectual workers including doctors, actors, accountants and other white collar workers. They were almost all settled on kolkhozes to perform physical labor with only a small number employed in the areas of their specialization on machine tractor machines.[366] Again as happened in Krasnoiarsk Krai, a large number of urban German deportees found themselves dumped on kolkhozes without any relevant job skills or experience. Integrating Germans from Moscow and Baku into agricultural labor proved considerably more difficult than moving kolkhoz workers from one kolkhoz to another.

The NKVD settled the deported Germans in the district into already overcrowded kolkhozes in apartment sections. Those

365 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 278.
366 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 279–279 ob.

empty houses that existed did not have glass for windows and obtaining glass in the district was extremely difficult. The deportees suffered a severe shortage of food and fuel. In particular they lacked vegetables, bread, and meat. There was also almost no coal and only a small amount could be delivered from the city of Karaganda, 150 kilometers away. For fuel the Germans had to use dried manure mixed with straw. The deportees also lacked warm clothes and shoes suitable for wearing while working outside in the region's extreme winter climate. This made it difficult to assign them to much kolkhoz work.[367] This was a recurring problem in Kazakhstan and Siberia during the first few years of exile for the German deportees.

The NKVD had started a count of the German special settlers using the family registration cards of the special settlers with the district commandant. Passportization had been completed with the exception of 250 people in four villages. The NKVD intended to finish passportization by 1 January 1942.[368] The issuance of passports to special settlers was one of the initial NKVD goals regarding the resettlement that became delayed due to lack of resources in many places.

The integration of German deportees into the kolkhoz system of Kazakhstan did not end their food difficulties. The amount of grain provided to kolkhoz workers remained minimal and working adults had to divide this amount among those members of their families that could not work such as children, the elderly, and invalids. As already noted children alone made up nearly 35% of the German special settlers in Kazakhstan. A 5 October 1941 report by the NKVD noted that German deportees working on kolkhozes in East Kazakhstan Oblast received only 200 to 400 grams of bread a day.[369] Even for a single man, 400 grams of bread a day is a starvation ration. It is physically impossible to feed a family with it.

367 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 279–279 ob.
368 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 86, l. 279.
369 Shtraus and Pankrats, pp. 148–149.

Justina Martens described the rations received by German deportees on the kolkhozes of Kazakhstan during 1942 as very meager.

> Each week the workers were given some grain, mostly rye or millet … Mind you there was not much to grind—only a small bag consisting of two or three kilograms. We had forgotten how to eat bread and there was just enough flour to make a soup. We threw in a few potatoes and a few dumplings. If we were given an onion or had salt or traded some clothing for butter we felt rich.[370]

Natalia Aleksanrovna Meyer told us a similar story of ethnic Germans suffering from hunger in Karaganda, Kazakhstan during the Second World War. Her testimony also confirmed the lack of bread and the difficulty in even finding onions.

> It was very difficult to live during the war. We fed on potatoes. Sometimes we were able to get some cabbage and onion. We did not have any clothing so we had to wear what mother knitted for us.[371]

As indicated in the quotations above, the food provided by the kolkhozes proved insufficient to feed the Germans working on them. German special settlers in Kazakhstan frequently moved from their assigned place of settlement to other regions with better food supplies. In northern Kazakhstan German deportees simply moved from kolkhoz to kolkhoz looking for food.[372] In order to physically survive many Germans found it necessary to barter their belongings for food or even beg or steal.[373] Much of the memoir literature points to the moral and social humiliation this imposed upon the once self-sufficient and proud Germans. In addition many of the deportees remained devout Christians with a strong moral aversion to some of these activities.

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370 Toews, *Journeys*, p. 76

371 Interview with Natalia Aleksandrovna Meyer in Kant on 14 November 2010.

372 German et al., p. 438.

373 Toews, *Journeys,* pp. 77–78 and Berta Bachmann, trans. Duin, Edgar, *Memories of Kazakhstan: A Report on the Life Experience of a German Woman in Russia.* Lincoln, NE: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1983, pp. 34–35, 43–45 and 59.

Food shortages remained a problem for the German special settlers in Kazakhstan and elsewhere up until 1948. The famine like conditions they suffered in 1941 persisted throughout the war and beyond. The Soviet state gave their survival a low priority. Nevertheless, there were some cases of the Soviet government providing emergency food aid to special settlers during this time to prevent their starvation. During the winter of 1945–1946 starvation threatened the lives of Germans in parts of northern Kazakhstan. In January and February 1946, the regime provided eight tons of wheat to the German special settlers in Tsuriupinsk Raion in Pavlodar Oblast, Kazakhstan. This food assistance represented between and two and four kilograms of grain a month for each special settler.[374] This meager additional ration provided just enough nutrition to keep the deported Germans alive as a labor force on the kolkhozes.

German deportees in Kazakhstan also suffered from outbreaks of infectious diseases. On 10 January 1942, the NKVD reported the existence of typhus and measles epidemics among the Germans settled on kolkhozes in Paludensk Raion in North Kazakhstan Oblast. The high death rate among the Germans from these two diseases alarmed the NKVD which feared that the epidemics would spread to other kolkhoz workers unless the regime took prophylactic measures to contain them.[375] It was this fear of infection spreading to Kazakh and Russian workers that motivated the Soviet government to provide the small amount of medical assistance that the Germans received during 1941 to 1955.

In the long run the German presence in the region had a profoundly positive influence on the local economy. Their strong work ethic and occupational segmentation into jobs considered undesirable by other Soviet nationalities made them an important labor force in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. One of the foremost Russian scholars on Stalin's repression, V.N. Zemskov has noted the salutary affect these forced migrants had on the region.

374 Shtraus and Pankrats, pp. 212–214.
375 Milova vol. II, doc. 64, pp. 239–240.

> Germans also more quickly and better than other exiled peoples mastered the system of managing the agricultural economy in the new regions of residence. This clearly followed the prediction that more civilized nations have a greater ability to survive in extreme situations. The entrepreneurship and work ethic of the Germans quickly transformed them into the most civilized layer in the economic life of the regions, to where they had been exiled, especially Kazakhstan and Central Asia.[376]

The ethnic Germans became absolutely essential to the agricultural economy in northern Kazakhstan. This economic importance is one of the key reasons that the Soviet government would not allow them to leave the region and return to their homelands in the Volga, Black Sea, and other areas of the European USSR after the death of Stalin. In contrast the far less vital North Caucasians and Kalmyks were allowed to return to their restored national territories in the late 1950s. Only the Germans, Crimean Tatars, and Meskhetian Turks remained in enforced internal exile in the period after 1958.

376 Zemskov 2005, p. 120.

# 8 Fishing in the Far North

The loss of Ukraine, Belorus and much of western Russia to the Germans in the fall of 1941 deprived the Soviets of a large portion of their meat production. They thus faced considerable shortages of protein during the first couple years of the war. This was especially a problem for the Red Army. To offset this problem the Soviet government took a number of measures to replace this lost livestock. One action was to try and raise more livestock in Kazakhstan which was still safely under Soviet rule. Another was to import large amounts of canned meat, Hormel's SPAM (Shoulder of Pork and Ham) from the US through Lend-Lease. The final measure was to greatly increase the amount of labor dedicated to fishing in the Soviet Far North in the Arctic Circle. In particular fishing in the many Siberian rivers that drain into the Arctic Ocean. The Soviet government requested that the NKVD send special settlers deported to Siberia to the Far North to provide man power for the fishing industry. Most of these special settlers were Volga Germans deported to Novosibirsk Oblast, Omsk Oblast, and Krasnoiarsk Krai. Others were Germans originally from Leningrad, Kalinin, and Voronezh oblasts. These deportees along with Ingrian Finns, Pontic Greeks, Lithuanians, and Russian kulaks were forced to extract fish from the frozen bodies of water in the Far North to make up a portion of the protein deficit suffered in the USSR due to the German occupation of its western territories. Mobilized initially in 1942 they worked at this task until 1946.

Soon after the mass deportation of Germans to Kazakhstan and Siberia the Soviet government again forcibly moved many of them to other locations for work. Initially the Soviet government wanted to transfer 120,000 deported Germans to the Far North to work in the fishing industry.[377] Already on 6 January 1942, the SNK and Central Committee of the CPSU issued a 27 page document "On the Growth of the Fishing Industry in the Basins of the

377 L.P. Belkovets, *Administrativno-Pravoe polozhenie rossisskikh nemtsev na spetsposelenii, 1941–1955 gg.: Istoriko-pravoe issledovanie.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003, p. 123.

Rivers of Siberia and the Far East" signed by Joseph Stalin.[378] This decree sought to increase the extraction of fish from the Ob, Irtysh, Yenisei, and Lena rivers, their tributaries, Lake Baikal, and the shores of Kamchatka, Primore, the Okhotsk Sea, and the Amur River. It established a planned goal of 155,000 metric tons of fish from Siberia during 1942 and 250,000 tons for 1943 for Siberia. This compared with an actual figure of 52,700 tons caught in Siberia during 1941. In the Far East basins the decree established a goal of 336,000 for 1942 and 420,000 tons for 1943. This was a substantial increase from the 270,400 tons actually caught in 1941.[379] On 20 July 1942, the SNK issued Resolution No. 1322-RS to fulfil the requests made on 6 January 1942 for labor in the fishing industry in the Far North. This resolution ordered the resettlement of 15,000 German special settlers from the central districts of Novosibirsk Oblast to Narym Okrug in the Far North of the region.[380] During 1942 the Soviet government planned to resettle 35,000 labor and special settlers to work in the fishing industry in the Far North and another 19,500 people in 1943. In actuality they resettled either 50,441 people to fishing zones in the Far North in 1942 of which 15,760 were dependents or 57,195 of which 32,172 were able bodied.[381] There are two conflicting reports from May 1943 regarding these numbers.

These figures came after an earlier set of figures given on 2 October 1942 by Major Ivanov. This report noted that by this time they had resettled 52,664 special settlers to the Far North to work in the fishing industry. Of this number only 35,684 were capable of actually working and 16,980 were dependent family members.[382] The limited labor pool prevented the Soviet government from ever reaching their goal of 120,000 able bodied special settlers working in the fishing industry of the Far North.

378 RGASPI, F. 17, O. 3, D. 1042, ll. 259–286.
379 RGASPI, F. 17, O. 3, D. 1042, l. 259.
380 Pobol and Polian, doc. 3.64, p. 372.
381 RGASPI, F. 17, O. 121, D. 241, ll, 59–60.
382 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 102, p. 360.

**Table 14: Number of Special Settlers Sent to Fishing Industry in Far North October 1942**[383]

| Territory | Number Planned | Number Sent | Able Bodied | Family Members |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omsk Oblast | 10,000 | 14,021 | 10,370 | 3,651 |
| Novosibirsk Oblast | 4,000 | 6,624 | 4,028 | 2,596 |
| Krasnoiarsk Krai | 15,000 | 22,939 | 15,848 | 7,091 |
| Yakut ASSR | 6,000 | 9,080 | 5,438 | 3,642 |
| Total | 35,000 | 52,664 | 35,684 | 16,980 |

One of the few documents to provide an ethnic break down of the special settlers deported to the Far North to work in the fishing industry is from March 1943 on Yakutia. It counted a total of 9,080 special settlers sent to the northern regions of Yakutia to fish from June to September 1942. It gives the following breakdown by nationality: 3,886 Lithuanians and Lithuanian Jews, 3,694 Finns, 753 Russians, 617 Germans, and 130 others. Except for the Lithuanians and Jews these deportees came from Leningrad Oblast.[384] Most other regions, however, must have had a majority of German workers that had first been deported to the southern regions of Siberia and then forcibly relocated a second time to the Far North in January 1942.

The material conditions of the Germans subjected to a second deportation to the Far North of Siberia to work in the fishing industry were extremely wretched. They had to construct their own housing. But, did not receive any construction materials for this purpose. Instead they had to use locally available resources. This meant living in mud huts without windows able to keep out water from rain, snow, or the rising rivers from which they fished for as long as four years.[385] These cold, dark, and damp huts proved conducive to the incubation and spread of contagious diseases.[386] The authorities did not quarantine the ill workers thereby exacerbating the poor health of the contingent as a whole.[387] Freezing

383 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 102, p. 360.
384 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 103, p. 361.
385 Bruhl, vol. II, pp. 103–106.
386 German and Kurochkin, p. 40 and Bruhl, vol. II, pp. 103–104.
387 German and Kurochkin, pp. 41–42.

cold weather and working in the icy rivers led to many cases of hypothermia that led to gangrene and resulted in the amputation of legs.[388] The material conditions of the German special settlers working in the fishing industry was even worse than those employed in agriculture to the south.

The mass mobilization of 159,000 ethnic German men and 84,000 women into the labor army in 1942 had used up the able bodied workers that the NKVD had planned to resettle in the northern regions of Siberia to work in the fishing industry in 1943. A similar process happened with the mobilization of 60,000 former kulaks into the Red Army, leaving only cadres in industrial work for defense industries. There were not 19,000 spare special settlers available physically capable of such work according to Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Chernyshov. For instance in Krasnoiarsk Krai the numbers available for such transfers in spring 1943 had been reduced from an initially planned 10,000 to 6,559 people capable of working. Out of this reduced number only 884 were adult men, 4,428 were women, and 1,247 adolescents between 15 and 18 years old.[389] This problem had been partially taken care of by October 1943. Chernyshov reported to Mikoyan that month that the total number of people transferred by the NKVD to work in the fishing industry in the Far North had reached 66,763 people. This included 13,861 in Omsk Oblast of whom 11,370 were physically capable of work. He did, however, note that it was not possible at all to make any more transfers of special settlers to the fishing industry in the Far North. He thus could not fulfill the request of the authorities in Omsk for another 1500 such workers at the time.[390] Most of the special settlers already in the far north of Omsk Oblast, 9,260 were Germans that arrived in Khanty-Mansiiskii (5,086) and Yamalo-Nenetskii okrugs (4,174) in early 1942 from southern Omsk. They had originally been deported from the Volga, Leningrad, Kalinin, and Vornonezh.[391] Only the

388 German and Kurochkin, p. 41.
389 RGASPI, F. 17, O. 121, D. 241, ll. 60–61.
390 Bugai 1998, doc. 195, p. 269.
391 Bruhl, vol. II, p. 106.

deportation of 91,919 Kalmyks on 27–28 December 1943 allowed the NKVD to send more special settlers to work in the fishing industry of the Far North.[392] The NKVD assigned 14,174 (15%) of these later deportees to work in the fishing industry in the north of Omsk Oblast.[393] The total number of special settlers sent to work in the fishing industry of the Far North, however, even in 1944 was far short of the initial proposed goal of 120,000.

Ida Bender, the daughter of Dominick Hollman, worked as a special settler for one of these fishing trusts during World War II at Iskup along the Yenisei River in Krasnoiarsk Krai. She described the work as extremely gruelling.

> Ewald and I became fishermen in a work group of four; with a young girl and a supervisor named Diener. We were assigned a boat and drag-net, even though we knew nothing about fishing. We were instructed to head out to the left bank of the Yenisei and begin fishing. We built a crude shelter out of branches and lived there during the week. Each day we repeatedly cast and pulled in the net, harvesting *tugun*, similar in appearance to herring and barely larger than the middle finger, preserving them in a few barrels. By the end of the day, we were wet from the waist down and extremely tired. We dried out our clothes and ourselves around the campfire while we cooked a soup from the fish. Every week we delivered our catch across the river and brought our rations for a few days, a meager six-hundred grams per person daily.[394]

This was a typical work day for the German special settlers deported a second time to the Far North of Siberia to work in the fishing industry and was repeated for tens of thousands men, women, and adolescents.

Conditions in the fishing trusts deteriorated in 1943 for a number of the German special settlers. In Narym Okrug in the far north of Novosibirsk Oblast the village of Mandyrki in Malchanovskii Raion had 15 huts by fall 1943 built for 164 special settlers in 38 families. Nine of these huts were uninhabitable. The remaining six huts were 18 square meters each and had an average of 19 residents. They all completely lacked light. Three of the

392 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 573, ll. 286–287.
393 Bugai 1995, 81.
394 Bender, p. 57.

huts lacked external doors and two had no stoves. The village of Nikol'skom in Krivosheinskii Raion had huts measuring 3.5 by 4 meters housing 13 families with 84 special settlers.[395] The fishing trusts set the norms for deliveries too high for most of the special settlers to fulfill. In 1953 they fulfilled 59% of the norms and thus only received 200 to 400 grams of bread a day plus 200 grams per dependent.[396] On 1 November 1943, the Malchonovskii fish factory removed 778 workers and their dependents from its supply rolls without any warning leaving them deprived of all supplies of bread. On the same day Krivosheinskii fish factory removed 200 special settlers from its supply rolls and Kolpashev 224.[397] The lack of food, warm clothes, proper housing, and medical care greatly increased the misery, morbidity, and mortality of the special settlers in the Far North.

The mobilization of Germans and other special settlers for the fishing industry of the Far North in 1942 and 1943 represented a midway point between the majority of the special settlers employed in agriculture in Siberia and Kazakhstan and those mobilized into the labor army. They also represented a disputed source of labor between the NKVD and other parts of the Soviet government. The NKVD preferred to mobilize the German special settlers into their own labor camps in the Urals and resisted handing over as many deportees to work in the fishing industries in the Far North as other branches of the Soviet government desired. Nonetheless, more than 66,000 special settlers most of them Volga Germans ended up being sent to the Far North to fish in 1942–1943.

395 Bruhl vol. II, p. 104.
396 Bruhl vol. II, p. 105.
397 Bruhl vol. II, p. 104.

# 9 The LABOR ARMY

In the wake of the deportations, the Stalin regime sought to use the Germans as an involuntary labor force. To this end it created the institution known as the labor army. The labor army formed a separate section of the vast system of forced labor in the Soviet Gulag. But, it also had elements of military formations. However, despite maintaining certain rights denied Gulag prisoners such as membership in the Communist Party and Komsomol and voting in Soviet elections, conscripts in the labor army occupied a status far closer to that of convicts than of free citizens. The NKO (People's Commissariat of Defense) inducted the Germans into mobilized labor columns on the same basis as it conscripted men into the Red Army. It then handed them over to the NKVD and initially NKPS (People's Commissariat of Transportation) to work in labor camps, construction sites, and on railway lines under NKVD supervision and discipline. These men and later women lived in barracks under conditions similar to prisoners. They received rations set according to GULag norms. Later labor army detachments also worked in enterprises run by various economic commissariats, most notably coal, oil and munitions. The labor army detachments working in these mines, rigs, and factories lived in barracks or hostels. They worked in fenced off and guarded areas under militarized discipline. The restricted areas where they worked were known as zones.[398] During the course of World War II the Soviet government mobilized over 316,600 Germans into forced labor detachments in the labor army.[399] In some families all men, women, and youths were conscripted into the labor army. In mixed families the NKO would induct all those that were German by natsional'nost' and spare those that were Russians. Ekaterina

398 A.A., German, "Mobilizovannye sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh NKVD i na khoziaistvennykh ob'ektakh drugikh narkomatov v gody velikoi otechestvennoi voiny," *Stranitsy velikoi otechestvennoi (k 60 – letiiu pobedy): Doklady Akademii Nauk*, 2005, no. 3 (15), p. 169.

399 Bugai 1998, p. 11.

Ivanovna Voronetskaia the daughter of a Russian father and German mother recalls that her mother and the entire maternal side of her family were conscripted into the labor army. But, she and her father who were registered as Russians were not.[400] Likewise Natalia Aleksandrovna Meyer, a Russian married to a German man deported from Mineral Vody in North Ossetia to Karaganda, Kazakhstan avoided conscription into the labor army herself. But, her husband and father in law did not.[401] Blood was the determining factor regarding mobilization into the labor army just as it had been regarding the deportations.

This institution started to take form in the fall of 1941 with the mobilization for forced labor of Germans from eastern Ukraine and the Red Army. The Stalin regime began the mobilization of Germans into forced labor columns that later became the labor army already in August 1941. The Politburo issued a decree "On Germans Living in the Territory of the Ukrainian SSR" on 31 August 1941. This decree had two parts. The first part ordered the arrest of "anti-Soviet" elements from among the Germans living in Ukraine that still remained under Soviet rule. The second part of this decree called for the mobilization of all remaining men aged 16 to 60 capable of physical labor into construction battalions by the NKO and their transfer to the NKVD to work in eastern regions of the USSR.[402] The NKO conducted this conscription and transfer very rapidly.

The German men 17 to 50 rounded up from eastern Ukraine by the military conscription offices into work columns initially were to be mobilized into detachments of 1500 each headed by a chekist with camp experience. Each detachment was to be divided into columns of 250 to 300 people and brigades of 50 to 75 men. Camp workers that were skilled in forestry were to head each column and brigade. They were to initially be under Red Army discipline and receive rations 10% to 15% above camp norms.

400 Interview with Ekaterina Ivanovna Voronetskaia in Kant on 14 November 2010.
401 Interview with Natalia Aleksandrovna Meyer in Kant on 14 November 2010.
402 Berdinskikh 2005, doc. 3, p. 316.

There was a 10%–15% bonus ration for good work. Mobilized Germans had to bring their own winter clothes, underwear, bedding, mug, and spoon to the recruitment office. Refusal to work carried a 10 year sentence in a labor camp and desertion could be punished by execution and legal sanctions against their family.[403] Already on 3 September 1941, Deputy Chief of the NKVD reported to Granovskii that they had received 18,600 Germans that they could mobilize into 13 battalions. These battalions would be subdivided into 5 to 6 companies of 200 to 300 people each. The chief of each battalion would be similar to commanding camp points (lagerpunkty) and have two assistants. While each company would have an engineer and a factory type commander. This company commander would support discipline and internal order. The communication ended with a note that the selection of these commanders had to be completed not later than the next two days.[404] These men became the first workers of the labor army before it was greatly expanded by three mass mobilizations in 1942.

The transformation of these work battalions from a more military organization to one closely resembling GULag prisoners began almost immediately. Already on 26 September 1941, Prikaz 001388 called for all construction battalions working in the NKVD system to be reorganized as work columns. This began the change in their supplies of food and other goods and discipline from their initial status as a form of alternative military service to forced laborers scarcely distinguishable from GULag prisoners. The NKVD at this point lifted them from their current supply regimen and noted that it would set new norms for their rations.[405] This was the first step in transforming the work battalions into a subset of forced labor under GULag administration and material conditions.

Germans purged from the Soviet military formed the next wave of recruits for the labor army. On 8 September 1941 the

403 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, l. 2.
404 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, l. 3.
405 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, l. 5 a.

*Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokomandovaniia* (Headquarters of the Supreme Head Commander of the military) issued Directive No. 35105 ordering the removal of all persons of German nationality from the army and military academies and their transfer to construction battalions.[406] The NKVD quickly created nine battalions of former German soldiers numbering 3,685 men in Kirov Oblast, Molotov Oblast, and the Udmurt ASSR.[407] These construction battalions still initially worked under the NKO but, the majority ended up in various NKVD camps and construction sites. Civilian commissariats supervised another 10,057 Germans in construction battalions until their demobilization under GKO Order Nr. 1476 on 21 March 1942.[408] Together with the German men conscripted from Ukraine these men formed the initial core of the labor army. It would quickly grow to be a vast network of forced labor columns.

The mobilization of Germans discharged from the Soviet military into forced labor detachments that later formed the labor army was near universal. Only a handful of Germans managed to avoid removal from the military ranks with the help of their superior officers.[409] The Soviet navy unsuccessfully attempted to have Captain E.V. Walter released from the Bogoslov Corrective Labor Camp. The response to their request from GULag on 5 June 1942 was the following, "independent of rank in the Red Army, position in the reserves, party membership, election to party and soviet posts etc.—all Germans, in accordance with the decree of the State Committee of Defense, are mobilized into work columns for the duration of the war."[410] In total the Soviets discharged about 33,000 ethnic Germans from the ranks of the Red Army and other military institutions.[411] The NKVD moved almost all of these men

406 S.U. Alieva, (ed.), *Tak eto bylo: Natsional'nye repressi v SSSR, 1919–1953.* Moscow: Insan, 1993, vol. 1, p. 14.
407 German and Kurochkin, p. 49.
408 Krieger, "Zwangsarbeitslager," p. 140.
409 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* p. 150.
410 Pobol and Polian, doc. No. 3.69, pp. 378–379.
411 Berdinskikh, pp. 323–324.

into the labor army.[412] They formed one of the first waves into the labor army.

The initial conscription of Germans into the labor army from eastern Ukraine and the Red Army was limited compared to the massive induction in 1942. By 1 January 1942, the number of German men working in the labor army consisted of 20,800 men.[413] They were assigned to four NKVD projects. These were the nickel mining camp at Kimpersai in Aktiubinsk Oblast, Kazakhstan, the lumber camp at Ivdellag in Sverdlovsk Oblast, the construction of the Bogoslov factory complex in Sverdlovsk Oblast, and the construction of the Solikamsk factory complex in Molotov Oblast. They were distributed as follows: 2,300 to Kimpersai, 2,500 to Ivdellag, 6,200 to Bogoslov, and 9,800 to Solikamsk.[414] The number of German labor army conscripts would massively increase after 10 January 1942.

The planning for the mass mobilization of deported Germans into labor camps started in early January 1942. On 2 January 1942, the Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Chernyshov issued a proposal on the question of using German men ages 17 to 50 for labor. This proposal noted the number of prisoners already working at five existing labor camps dedicated to lumber preparation and their ability and need to acquire more laborers. Four of these camps were in the Urals and one in Siberia. It also noted that a sixth labor camp devoted to lumber preparation could be organized in Novosibirsk Oblast. These six camps could take 79,000 to 80,000 mobilized Germans. In addition to these lumber camps the proposal noted that the construction of three industrial complexes in the Urals could absorb another 40,000 mobilized Germans. This initial blueprint was to guide the mobilization of Germans into the labor army in January 1942.

412 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 150.
413 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 38.
414 Bugai 1998, doc. 34, p. 57, doc. 36, pp. 59–60,

Proposal on the Question of Using German Men Ages 17–50.

2 January 1942

Kraslag Krasnoiarsk Krai has a program of lumber preparation for 1942—17 000 thousand cubic meters; has prisoners—workers—17 000 people; deficit workers' strength—6000 people; might take Germans—8000 people; by this might increase the program by 200 thousand cubic meters.

Ivdellag Sverdlovsk Oblast has a program of lumber preparation for 1942—2200 thousand cubic meters. On the condition that all workers [prisoners]—16700 people (need 32 000)—to Sevurralag might take Germans—30 000 people (has 2500 Germans).

Usol'lag Molotov Oblast has a program of lumber preparation for 1942—3500 thousand cubic meters; prisoners needed 40 500 people; has 32 130 people; might take Germans—9000 people.

Ust'vymlag Komi ASSR has a program of lumber preparation for 1942—1500 thousand cubic meters; prisoners working—15 000 people; might take Germans—7000 people.

Viatlag Perm Oblast has a program of lumber preparation—1500 thousand cubic meters; has working prisoners—21 000 people; might take Germans—10 000 people.

Might organize a new camp in Novosibirsk Oblast—Tomasinskii camp, transferred from the People's Commissariat of Forestry in 1940—for a program of 850 thousand cubic meters. Might take Germans—15 000 people.

Total to be used for lumber preparation—79 000–80 000 people.

Bakal factory Cheliabinsk Oblast—for construction of Bakal metallurgical factory (mainly in the stage of work up until August 1942)—30 000 people.

Bogoslov factory Sverdlovsk Oblast—for construction—5000 people.

Solikamsk factory Molotov Oblast—construction—5000 people.

Total to be used in the economy of the NKVD USSR—120 000 people.

Deputy Chief
Internal Affairs USSR
Chernyshov[415]

415 Bugai 1998, doc. 34, p. 57.

This plan, however, became greatly altered in scarcely more than a week with the actual mobilization order only calling for 45,000 Germans to be mobilized into lumber camps and 35,000 for industrial construction. The remaining 40,000 were to be mobilized into the NKPS for the construction of railroads. The original proposal to mobilize 80,000 Germans for lumber camps, however, would shortly afterwards be revived.

Stalin issued GKO Order 1123ss calling for the mobilization of 120,000 able bodied ethnic German men from the ages 17–50 that had been deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan on 10 January 1942. This decree proposed to induct 45,000 for lumber preparation under the NKVD, 35,000 for the construction of the Bakal and Bogoslov factories also under the supervision of the NKVD, and finally 40,000 for rail construction under the NKPS. The NKO (People's Commissariat of Defense) conducted this mobilization for forced laborers among the deported Germans in the same manner it normally inducted men into the military. The mobilized men received draft notices and were required to show up to induction points with proper winter clothing, underwear, bedding, mugs, spoons, and a ten day supply of food. The NKO had 20 days to complete this process after which they had 11 days to deliver the mobilized Germans to their assigned places of work in cooperation with the NKPS. They were then formed into work columns under the NKVD or NKPS. Failure to show up for mobilization, desertion, and shirking were punished by special tribunals of the NKVD and included execution. Food rations and other supplies for the mobilized Germans were the same as GULag prisoners.[416] This mobilization involved another mass removal of Germans from Siberia and Kazakhstan, mostly to the Urals for felling timber and industrial construction.

416 RGASPI F. 644, O. 1, D. 19, ll. 49–50.

State Defense Committee

Resolution No. GKO-1123ss

From 10 January 1942 Moscow, Kremlin

ON ORDERLY USE OF GERMAN-RESETTLERS BETWEEN

THE AGES OF 17 TO 50 YEARS

With the goal of rationally using German-resettler men between the ages of 17 to 50 years, the State Defense Committee resolves:

1. All German men in the ages of 17 to 50 years, physically capable of labor, exiled to Novosibirsk and Omsk oblasts, Krasnoiarsk and Altai krais and the Kazakh SSR, are to be mobilized in numbers up to 120,000 in work columns for the entire time of the war, transfer them in the following division:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a) | NKVD USSR—lumber preparation | 45,000 |
| | -"- —construction of Bakal and Bogoslov factories | 35,000 |
| b) | NKPS USSR—construction of rail roads Stalinsk-Abakan, Stalinsk-Barnaul, Akmolinsk-Kartaly, Akmolinsk-Pavlodar Sos'va-Alapaevsk, Orsk-Kandagach Magnitagorsk-Sara | 40,000 |

Conduct of the operation is entrusted to the NKO (c. Schadenko), together with the NKVD and NKPS.
The mobilization is to be started immediately and finished 30 January 1942.
2. Requires all mobilized Germans to appear at collection points of the People's Commissariat of Defense with proper winter clothing and underwear, bedding, mugs, spoons and a ten day supply of food.
3. Requires the NKPS and Administration of Military Transportation NKO to provide for transporting the mobilized Germans in the course of the month of January and delivering them to places of work not later than 10 February.
4. Requires the NKVD USSR and NKPS USSR to establish in the work columns and detachments of mobilized Germans strict order and discipline, providing the highest conduct of labor and fulfillment of productive norms.
5. Assigns to the NKVD USSR the task in relationship to failure of mobilized Germans to show up to induction points or collection points for transfer, and also in relationship to being found in the work columns to be in violation of discipline and refusal to work, failure to appear for mobilization, desertion from work columns, to examine these cases by Special

Tribunals of the NKVD and apply punishments up to and including the death penalty in the most egregious cases.
6. Establish norms of food and manufactured goods supplied to the mobilized Germans the same as the norm established by GULAG NKVD USSR.
Requires the People's Commissariat of Trade USSR to give the NKVD USSR and NKPS USSR for all members of the mobilized Germans stocks of food and industrial goods for this norm in its totality.
7. People's Commissariat of Agriculture is to give in the course of the months January–February to the NKVD USSR for lumber preparation 3,500 horses.
People's Commissariat of Procurement USSR is to give additional stocks of fodder for the 3,500 horses.
People's Commissariat of Finance USSR together with the NKVD USSR is to provide in the finance plan of the NKVD necessary funds to pay for transferring the Germans and other expenses for their economic provision.

CHAIRMAN STATE
DEFENSE COMMITTEE
I. STALIN[417]

Two days later the NKVD issued a proposal for the division of the 80,000 mobilized Germans to be used in lumber preparation and industrial construction. Bakalstroi was to receive the most workers with 30,000 while Bogoslov the other factory complex would get 5,000. The remaining six camps were devoted to tree cutting and five of them were in the Urals. The remaining logging camp, Kraslag, was in Siberia. The two largest such camps to receive 12,000 men each were Ivdel'lag and Sevurallag.[418] The NKO failed to meet its quota of mobilizing 120,000 deported German men. Hence the actual numbers to be distributed to the various NKVD camps and the NKPS fell short of the goals set by the original 10 January 1942 order issued by Stalin.

417 RGASPI F 644, O. 1, D. 19, ll. 49–50.
418 GARF F. 9401, O. 1. 1, D. 10, l. 10.

**Table 15: 12 January 1942 Proposal for Mobilization of Germans[419]**

| Name of Camp | Number of Proposed Inductees | Economic Purpose of Camp |
|---|---|---|
| Ivdel'lag | 12,000 | Logging |
| Sevurallag | 12,000 | Logging |
| Usol'lag | 5,000 | Logging |
| Viatlag | 7,000 | Logging |
| Ust'vymlag | 4,000 | Logging |
| Kraslag | 5,000 | Logging |
| Bakalstroi | 30,000 | Industrial Construction |
| Bogoslovstroi | 5,000 | Industrial Construction |
| Total | 80,000 | Logging and Construction |

The 12 January 1942 NKVD Prikaz No. 00083 by Beria on the mobilization of ethnic Germans to work in labor camps in accordance with GKO Order 1123ss had nine points. The first point provided a proposed distribution of 80,000 Germans to eight different corrective labor camps of which seven were in the Urals and one in Siberia. The second point was addressed directly to the camp directors and had five sub points. The first of which ordered them to prepare to receive the incoming mobilized Germans and to accommodate them separately from the convicted prisoners. The second sub point dealt with the organization of the mobilized Germans into various militarized work units. They were to be formed in special camp points. Then formed into detachments of 1500 to 2000 men divided into columns of 300–500 men, and finally into brigades of 30 to 100 men. These detachments were to be economically self sufficient and receive no subsidies for expenses. The third sub point dealt with appointing camp chekists to supervise the mobilized Germans and the use of skilled specialists among them. Each detachment corresponding to a camp point was to be overseen by the best camp chekists available and skilled and experienced personnel to supervise each column. Skilled mobilized Germans were to be used in the areas of their specialized skills. The next sub point decreed that the food and industrial goods rations provided to the mobilized Germans in the camps

419 GARF F. 9401, O. 1a, D. 110, l. 10.

were to be issued according to the already established GULag norms. The final sub point ordered that the brigades, columns, and detachments of mobilized Germans in the camps were to be under the strictest discipline and order. The next full point commanded the camp commanders to organize operative agents among the mobilized Germans to prevent violations of discipline, sabotage, and desertion. The fourth point authorized the imposition of criminal penalties including execution for Germans avoiding mobilization or violating discipline, refusing to work, or deserting their brigades, columns, or detachments. These acts were all to be treated as crimes and reviewed by special boards of the NKVD. In the next point the chief of the GULag NKVD, Nasedkin received ultimate responsibility for the supervision and control of the formation of the detachments of mobilized Germans including their use as a labor force and the supply of their rations. The sixth point called upon Chief of ULLP (Directorate of Forestry and Wood Processing Industry) Timofeev, to provide the logging camps receiving mobilized Germans a total of 3,500 horses for the months January and February 1942. The seventh point dealt with the financial aspects of the mobilization and appointed Chief of the TsFPO (Central Finance and Planning Department) of the NKVD, Berenzon to provide the NKVD with a plan for the means to pay for the transportation and other expenses involved in the mobilization of Germans for forced labor. The penultimate point ordered Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Obruchnikov to provide 100 chekist commanders to the camps receiving mobilized Germans. The final point in the prikaz gave ultimate authority for the permanent supervision of the formation and work of the detachments of the mobilized Germans in corrective labor camps to deputy chiefs of the NKVD, Kruglov, Chernyshov, and Zaveniagin.[420] This short four page document provided the basic framework for the NKVD's system of forced labor that came to be known as the labor army.

420 GARF F. 9401, O. 1a, D. 110, ll. 10–11.

Also on 12 January 1942, Beria also issued, "Regulations on the Orderly Maintenance, Structure, Discipline, and Work Use of Resettled Germans Mobilized in Work Columns." The mobilized Germans were to be housed in camp barracks surrounded by a restricted zone patrolled by armed guards provided by GULag. The labor army conscripts were to be subject to roll call twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. Any absences were to be immediately investigated. The work day for the mobilized Germans was set at 10 hours a day with one day off every ten days for a total of three free days a month.[421] The mobilized Germans now much more closely resembled GULag prisoners than they did military conscripts in their legal and material conditions.

In preparation for implementing GKO order 1123ss the NKVD did a count of the number of deported German men older than 16 in Siberia and Kazakhstan. They found 152,588 men eligible for the labor army of which a majority of 85,280 lived in Kazakhstan. Most of these men lived in the northern regions of Akmola, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Kustanai, and Semipalatinsk oblasts.[422] The initial mobilization plans called for mobilizing 68,000 Germans deported to Kazakhstan out of a planned total of 120,000 for the labor army. The plan divided these men into 80,000 for NKVD camps and construction sites and 40,000 for rail construction under the NKPS. Deportees to Kazakhstan made up 43,000 of those to be sent to the NKVD and 25,000 of those slated to work for the NKPS. The exact distribution of potential conscripts from Kazakhstan included 30,000 to Bakalstroi, 12,000 Sevurallag, 1,000 to Viatlag, and 25,000 to the NKPS for rail construction on seven different projects. This adds up to 68,000 out of 120,000 with the remaining 52,000 divided between 15,000 from Novosibirsk Oblast, 12,000 Omsk Oblast, 10,000 Krasnoiarsk Krai, and 15,000 Altai Krai.[423] Thus the German men deported to Ka-

421 Bugai 1998, doc. 80, pp. 114–117 and V.N. Triakhov, *Gulag i voina: Zhestokaia Pravda dokumentov*. Perm: Pushka, 2005, pp. 141–144.
422 Bugai 1998, doc. 33, p. 56.
423 Bugai 1998, doc. 35, pp. 58–59.

zakhstan provided the majority of initially planned conscripts to the labor army.

A report sometime between 10 January and 16 February 1942 from Chernyshov and Serov to Beria noted that out of 749,950 deported Germans that 154,588 were men aged 17 to 50. Of these 85,280 were in Kazakhstan. From these men were to be conscripted 120,000 workers to join the 20,800 already working for the NKVD in the Urals (18,500) and Kazakhstan (2,300). The division of these additional 120,000 labor conscripts was to be divided along the exact same lines as originally proposed on 2 January 1942.[424] Not mentioned in this document is anything about building railways for the NKPS.

The conscription and movement of these men, however, took place slowly and was incomplete. By 6 February 1942, the Kazakh authorities had reported to Moscow their intention to move 15,000 deported German labor army conscripts to train stations for assignment to various camps and constructions sites.[425] The Kazakh authorities desired to keep skilled Germans such as tractor drivers and combine operators in the agricultural economy and therefore exempted from service in the labor army.[426] According to the Kazakh military commissar there were 3,087 such individuals in Kazakhstan on 11 March 1942.[427] The problems in Kazakhstan and elsewhere resulted in a serious short fall in labor army conscripts.

Germans who deserted from the forced labor columns or refused to carry out their work assignments came under article 58-14 of the RSFSR criminal code. Article 58 concerned counterrevolutionary crimes and punishments ranged up to the death penalty.[428] On 18 January 1943, the NKVD noted that violations of labor discipline, desertion and refusal to work by Germans in the labor army would be tried under article 59-6 of the RSFSR crimi-

424 Bugai 1998, doc. 36, pp. 59–60.
425 Karpykova, doc. 60, p. 117.
426 Karpykova, docs. 61–63, pp. 117–119.
427 Karpykova, doc. 61, pp. 117–118.
428 Bugai 1998, doc. 91, p. 126.

nal code and by special boards of the NKVD who had the power to impose the death penalty.[429] The legal restrictions on the labor army conscripts differed little from those imposed on GULag prisoners.

Amazingly despite the harsh restrictions placed upon the German men conscripted into the labor army they were allowed to maintain their membership in the party and komsomol. On 10 March 1942, the NKVD instructed its personnel to confiscate the passports and military tickets of German men arriving in labor camps, but to allowed them to retain their komsomol and Communist Party cards.[430] The Communist Party and Komsomol members in the labor army continued to hold regular meetings while working in NKVD camps.[431] Later these men would assist the NKVD authorities in maintaining order and preventing escapes among the Germans in the labor army.

German men aged 17–50 already living in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Siberia, the Far East and the Urals prior to 1941 became subject to conscription into the labor army on 14 February 1942 with the passage of GKO Order 1281ss.[432] This mobilization entailed the round up and deportation of tens of thousands of German men with residency in eastern regions of the USSR before 1941. None of the men conscripted into the labor army under this decree served in camps or construction sites located near their homes. The Germans living in Kazakhstan and Central Asia found themselves moved to the Urals. The Soviet regime transported the local Germans from Central Asia mobilized under this decree to Cheliabinsk to work on the South Ural Railway. The NKVD relocated Germans from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as well as the Bashkir ASSR to work on this project.[433] The Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Kruglov informed the head of the Bakalstroi camp, Komorov, "Your camp will re-

429 Bugai 1998, doc. 109, pp. 142–143.
430 Bugai 1998, doc. 89, p. 125.
431 Berdinskikh, pp. 426–444.
432 RGASPI F. 644, o. 1, d. 21, l. 51.
433 German 2005, p. 172.

ceive between 10 to 12 thousand Germans mobilized from those permanently living in the Tajik, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Kazakh, Bashkir republics, and also Cheliabinsk, Chkalov, and Riazan oblasts."[434] The Stalin regime excluded local Germans in Siberia, the Far East, the Urals, Kazakhstan and Central Asia from military service and instead subjected them to forced labor.

The shortfalls in the NKO mobilization of German men deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan under GKO Order 1123ss were quite significant. The biggest deficits were felt by the NKPS which only received 25,000 men out of the proposed 40,000.[435] Out of the 80,000 proposed for NKVD camps 67,961 were mobilized under GKO Order 1123ss.[436] So the NKO's induction was short by a total of nearly 27,000 men.

**Table 16: Mobilization of Germans by GKO Order 1123ss as of 11 April 1942[437]**

| Name of Camp | Number of Mobilized Germans and Purpose |
|---|---|
| Bakalstroi | 11,722 Industrial Construction |
| Ivdel'lag | 12,899 Logging |
| Sevurallag | 8,441 Logging |
| Usol'lag | 4,940 Logging |
| Viatlag | 6,800 Logging |
| Kraslag | 5,084 Logging |
| Bogoslovstroi | 6,900 Industrial Construction |
| Sevzheldorlag | 4,755 Railway Construction |
| Solikamstroi | 2,396 Industrial Construction |
| Tavdinlag | 1,918 Logging |
| Taglistroi | 2,870 Industrial Construction |
| Total | 67,961 Logging and Construction |

The shortfall of mobilized Germans from GKO Order 1123ss prompted the Soviet government to expand the pool of ethnic Germans eligible for service in the labor army already in February 1942. Stalin thus issued a second mass mobilization order for ethnic Germans on 14 February 1942. This second resolution,

434 Triakhov, p. 146.
435 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 110, l. 126.
436 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 65.
437 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 65

GKO-1281ss subjected the ethnic Germans that had previously been living in Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, the Urals, and other eastern areas of the USSR to service in the labor army. The NKO had a deadline of 25 March 1942 to mobilize this second wave of German conscripts. Delivery of these mobilized men to their new places of work was to be completed by 30 March 1942 by the NKO and NKPS. Otherwise the decree was very similar to GKO Order 1123ss.[438]

State Defense Committee
Resolution No. GKO-1281ss

From 14 February 1942 Moscow, Kremlin

**On mobilizing German men ages 17 to 50 years, permanently living in oblasts, krais, autonomous and union republics**

State Defense Committee Resolves:
1. All German men of the ages 17 to 50 years, capable of physical labor, permanently living in Arkhangelsk, Vologda, Ivanova, Molotov, Penza, Riazan, Sverdlovsk, Tambov, Chita, Cheliabinsk, Chkalov, Yaroslav, Kirov, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Kubyshev and Irkutsk oblasts, Primore, Khabarovsk, Altai and Krasnoiarsk krais, Bashkir, Mordvin, Mari, Tatar, Udmurt, Chuvash, Buriat-Mongol and Komi ASSRs, Kazakh, Turkmen, Tajik, Kyrgyz and Uzbek SSRs—are to be mobilized into work columns for the entire time of the war and handed over to the NKVD for use in the construction of railroads.
Conduct of the mobilization is entrusted to the NKO (c. Shchadenko) together with the NKVD USSR. The mobilization is to be completed by 25 March 1942.
2. Requires the NKPS and Administration of Military Transportation of the NKO to provide transport to the mobilized Germans with delivery to their places of work on the request of the NKVD no later than 30 March 1942.
3. Enforce order during the mobilization and uphold the upkeep of the mobilized Germans as established by resolution of the GKO from 10 January 1942 No. 1123ss points 2,3,4 for all those newly mobilized.
4. Requires the People's Commissariat of Food, People's Commissariat of Meat, People's Commissariat of Procurement, and People's Commissariat of Fisheries to provide for the month of March and the second quarter to GULAG NKVD on account the transfer of the remaining food rations according to schedule. Forward to the People's Commissariat of Trade USSR

438 RGASPI F. 644, O. 1, D. 21, L. 51.

provisions of food and manufactured supplies for the mobilized on the basis of point 6 of resolution GKO 1123ss from 10.1.42.
5. People's Commissariat of Finance of the USSR, together with the NKVD USSR is to provide in the finance plan of the NKVD USSR the funds to pay for the transport of the Germans and other expenses for their economic provision.

CHAIRMAN STATE
DEFENSE COMMITTEE I. STALIN[439]

In the wake of GKO Order 1281ss of 14 February 1942, the NKVD conducted a count of the number of German men aged 17–50 eligible for mobilization under this order. The NKVD inquiry counted a total of 25,123 such men. Over half these men were located in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Kazakhstan had 8,161, Kyrgyzstan 2,146, Uzbekistan 1,825, Turkmenistan 448 and Tajikistan 440.[440] A later recount on 1 March 1942 revised these numbers to 30,983 available men between the 16 and 50. Again, over half of these men were in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The NKVD found 10,255 eligible men in Kazakhstan, 2,676 in Kyrgyzstan, 2,280 in Uzbekistan, 559 in Turkmenistan, and 550 in Tajikistan.[441] The number of local German men in Kazakhstan and Central Asia available for service in the labor army numbered over 13,000. The number actually mobilized, however, exceeded this number. The decree mobilized nearly 41,000 local Germans from the men living in the German communities established in non-European areas of the USSR before 1941. The largest number of these mobilized workers were assigned to work on the Sivyazhsk-Ul'yanovsk Railroad, nearly 18,000 men followed by the construction of the Bakal metallurgical complex with close to 15,000 men.[442] The second wave of forced conscription into the labor army was successful in bringing the number of mobilized Germans over the 120,000 goal initially set in January 1942.

439 RGASPI F. 644, O. 1, D. 21, l. 51.
440 Bugai 1998, doc. 38, pp. 61–62.
441 Bugai 1998, doc. 42, pp. 66–67.
442 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 65.

**Table 17: Mobilization of Germans According to GKO Order 1281ss by 11 April 1942[443]**

| Name of Camp | Number of Mobilized Germans and Function |
|---|---|
| Sviyazhsk-Ul'yanovsk Railroad | 17,823 Railway Construction |
| Bakalstroi | 14,752 Industrial Construction |
| Bogoslovstroi | 5,411 Industrial Construction |
| Umal'stroi | 952 Transportation Construction |
| Tagilstroi | 501 Industrial Construction |
| Sevzheldorlag | 900 Railway Construction |
| Kraslag | 339 Logging |
| Solikamstroi | 141 Industrial Construction |
| Viatlag | 45 Logging |
| Total | 40,864 Logging and Construction |

The second mass wave of mass conscription into the labor army targeted the adult males among the more than 200,000 Germans living in eastern regions of the USSR before World War II. These men had avoided deportation and conscription during the first mass induction into the labor army. The Stalin regime drafted 40,864 men into the labor army during this second wave.[444] As a result of this second draft the number of German men serving in the labor army grew to over 100,000.

While the vast majority of Germans conscripted into the labor army were resident in Kazakhstan or Siberia at the time of their induction, their original areas of residency before the 1941 deportations were mostly elsewhere. Out of 74,473 labor army conscripts sent to Bakallag, Bogoslavlag, Tagillag, and Sevurallag 28,483 (38.24%) came from the Volga, 21,369 (28.69%) from Ukraine, Crimea, and Moldova, 4,636 (6.23%) from the North Caucasus and South Russia, 3,503 (4.7%) from Kazakhstan, and the rest from other regions.[445] The largest German group mobilized into the labor army by geography were the Volga Germans

443 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 65.

444 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 65.

445 V.M. Kirillov and E.V. Follenweider, "Sotsial'nyi portret trudmobilizvannykh Sevurralaga," *Ezhgodnik Mezhdunarodnoi assotsiatsii issledovatelei istorii i kultury rossiiskikh nemtsev,* No. 4, 2018, p. 131.

followed by the Black Sea Germans. These two regions accounted for almost 67% of the labor army conscripts in these four camps.

In the summer of 1942, the Soviet government began to expel free Germans working in certain industries and transferring them to NKVD work columns, i.e. the labor army. In June 1942, the NKVD conscripted an additional 4,500 Germans to work on the Sviaizhsk-Ul'ianovsk rail way.[446] The NKVD demanded that Germans in the non-ferrous metals, electronics, aviation, coal and armament industries be removed from work sites and enterprises and mobilized into the labor army. These demands fell upon the Germans living in Central Asia, the Far North, the Urals and Siberia before 1941. Those living in the European areas of the USSR had already been confined to agricultural work in Kazakhstan and Siberia in the wake of the deportations. The Germans in Kyrgyzstan, however, still worked in some cases as skilled laborers. Among the factories that concerned the NKVD was arms factory No. 60 in Frunze. The Peoples Commissar of Internal Affairs specifically mentioned it in a letter to the Deputy Peoples Commissar of Armaments dated 28 August 1942.[447] The Stalin regime sought the transfer of all able-bodied Germans to labor columns regardless of occupation.

The conscription of a large number of local German men living in Kazakhstan and Central Asia left many families without any able bodied men to work and earn labor days in the kolkhozes. In Kyrgyzstan like many other areas of the USSR some villages became almost completely stripped of young adult German males. In the village of Orlov in the Talas Valley, only women, children, and old men remained for the most part by fall 1942.[448] This lack of man power became exacerbated after 7 October 1942 when the Stalin regime began conscripting women into the labor army. Many German villages became populated mainly by the elderly, invalids and children as a result. The Soviet government forcibly removed the rest of the population to work in the labor army.

446 German, Sovietskie nemtsy, p. 283.
447 Triakhov, p. 157.
448 Alieva, vol. I, p. 163.

The high mortality and morbidity rates greatly reduced the ranks of the labor army during the summer of 1942. The exemptions for conscription for 1281ss were considerably less than for 1123ss, but they were not non-existent. In March 1942 the total number of Germans exempted for mobilization in the labor army under these two decrees as skilled agricultural workers in Kazakhstan alone was 9,494 men.[449] This number did not include exemptions due to poor health, lack of proper clothing, or other reasons pertaining to inability to work. It only included those the republic authorities desired to retain for farm labor in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless during spring and summer of 1942 the labor army conscripts suffered abnormally high numbers of premature deaths and debilitating illness reducing their work strength.

The labor army conscripts suffered from wretched living conditions. Even more so than the special settlers on kolkhozes in Kazakhstan they lacked all the necessities of life. They suffered from inadequate housing, clothing, nutrition, and medical care.[450] Ailments such as typhus, tuberculosis, pellagra, scurvy, dystrophy, dysentery and emaciation plagued the men and later women conscripted into the labor army.[451] Condemned to heavy labor in industrial construction, tree felling, and mining in often frigid climates they also easily fell prey to exposure, exhaustion, and accidental injury. A great many Germans, particularly men, died from such causes during 1942–1943.

Official figures on deaths in the labor army are extremely fragmentary. One report from Chief of the OURZ GULag Captain of State Security Granovskii on 31 August 1942 listed some of the numbers involved. More importantly it noted the incomplete and very partial nature of this data.

According to incomplete figures in the course of January–July 1942, in only 5 camps a total listed population as of 1 August of 43,856 mobilized German men died 5181 people.

449 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 64.
450 Bugai 1998, doc. 153, pp. 232–233, doc. 155, p. 234.
451 Bugai 1998, doc. 142, pp. 224–225, doc 157, p. 235, and doc. 244, p. 315.

Especially high death rates were noted in Solikamstroi, where in seven months died 1687 people, that constituted 17.6% of the listed population as of 1 August, Bogoslovstroi—during this period 1494 people, or 12.6% died, and Sevzheldorlag, where in three months died 677 people, or 13.9% of the listed population as of 1 August.[452]

The vast majority of these deaths were the result of diseases related to poor nutrition both regarding the lack of key nutrients and overall calories. The number of sick and invalid mobilized Germans increased from 11.5% on 1 July 1942 to 25.9% on 1 January 1943. By 1 July 1943 it had decreased to 15%.[453] Felix Littau who was mobilized to work in Bakalstroi noted that during the winter of 1942–1943 men died frequently around him and that he only survived because he was physically small and did not need much food to survive.[454] An eight page formal report from Senior Inspector of OURZ GULag, Nechaev and Dep. Chief of ULLP Engalychev from 3 July 1943 on Germans mobilized into Viatlag detailed the problems of excess death and sickness in the labor army.[455] In February and March 1942 the camp received 6,977 Germans from Krasnoiarsk Krai, Altai Krai, and Kazakhstan to work in the logging industry. Already by Spring 1942 many of these Germans could not fulfil their assigned work norms due to poor health.[456] The failure to fulfil the norms led to a reduction in rations. During this time the percentage of Germans on punishment rations at Viatlag was as high as 34%.[457] This led to a massive increase in the number of mobilized Germans in the camp classified in Group C, those unable to work due to physical illness. The percentage of Germans at Viatlag in this category grew from 2.3% in February 1942 to 32.3% in August 1942. There was also a significant increase in monthly deaths among the Germans in the camp

452 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, ll. 149–150.
453 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 38.
454 Interview with Felix Littau in Kant on 14 November 2010.
455 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, ll. 35–43.
456 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, l. 35.
457 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1, ll. 35–36.

from 5 in March 1942 to 229 in August 1942. The camp then undertook measures to reduce illnesses among the contingent. In the fall of 1942 there was a decrease in the percentage of mobilized Germans in Group C. This, however, changed in November 1942 due to cold weather, renewed reduction of rations, and a rash of self mutilations. By December 1942, Group C comprised 40.3% of the mobilized Germans in Viatlag.[458] The chief illnesses responsible for these high rates of morbidity and mortality were those caused by malnutrition. These included vitamin deficiencies, pellagra, acute emaciation, heart disease, and tuberculosis.[459] Despite more measures taken in 1943 to restore the health of the mobilized Germans at Viatlag in 1943, their physical conditions continued to deteriorate. By April 1943 the percentage of German labor army conscripts in Group C had reached 63.2% in this camp. The report diagnosed the cause of this deterioration to be inadequate food especially a lack of vegetables and potatoes as well as extremely long working hours, up to 20 hours a day and more, among the brigades loading lumber onto train wagons. By June 1943 only 3,648 mobilized Germans remained in the camp after 3,329 or nearly half had left for various reasons, mostly being released due to poor health 1,306 or death 1,186.[460] Many of those released due to poor health would also die shortly thereafter. By 25 June 1943 only 1,915 mobilized Germans in Viatlag were classified as Group A, capable of physical labor vs 1,627 in Group C. All of the mobilized Germans were spread across four camp points and engaged in felling trees and loading the logs for transport.[461] In the second quarter of 1942 there was a severe lack of fat, vegetables, potatoes, and fresh meat for the mobilized Germans in the camp. There was also insufficient flour and cereals for the labor army conscripts. They thus both lacked proper nutrients and sufficient calories to carry out heavy labor. This exacerbated the already poor health of many of the inductees. Of the 1,308 Germans demobilized from

458 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, l. 36.
459 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, ll. 36–37.
460 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, ll. 37–38.
461 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D.1183, l. 38.

Viatlag due to health reasons from February to June 1943, nearly 40% had been incapable of heavy physical labor before their mobilization.[462] The two biggest health problems faced by the mobilized Germans in Viatlag were vitamin deficiencies and emaciation, both caused by poor diet.[463] A list of food lacking in the camp included wheat flour, cereal, fresh meat, fresh fish, vegetable oil, animal fat, cottage cheese, vegetables and potatoes, tomato puree, and potato flour. This led to very high levels of pellagra and deficiencies of vitamins B and C.[464] In the period of time between February and April 1943 most of the deaths and discharges of Germans from Viatlag were due to vitamin deficiencies and emaciation.[465] Viatlag was typical of Soviet labor camps in that most of the deaths and invalid releases were a result of maladies resulting from malnutrition.

The massive loss of man power already by fall 1942 forced the Soviet authorities to again expand the pool of available conscripts for the labor army. This time the mobilization included men aged 51–55, male adolescents aged 15–16, and women aged 16–45 that were not pregnant and did not have children younger than three years old. This happened in accordance with GOKO decree no 2383ss of 7 October 1942.[466] This decree was the first mobilization order to be applied to women. Only German women were ever subjected to conscription into the labor army. On 12 October 1942, GULag issued a report on the number of Germans available for mobilization to work in the People's Commissariats of Coal and Oil. The total number of Germans in 34 territorial divisions of the USSR was 1,031,290. The Soviet government, however, deemed that 15,165 living in distant regions of the USSR that had less than a 1,000 Germans each to be too difficult to mobilize. This and a few other exceptions reduced the total population from which to conscript labor to 1,015,921. Of course the vast

462 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, l. 39.
463 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, l. 40.
464 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, l. 41.
465 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1183, l.
466 RGASPI F. 644, O. 1, D. 61, ll. 138–140.

majority of these people did not qualify for induction due to age or physical health. The total number of Germans eligible for induction numbered 95,300 divided between 30,000 men and 65,300 women. The Soviet government planned to mobilize and move 20,500 men to work in the People's Commissariat of Coal and 36,700 women to work in the People's Commissariat of Oil for a total of 57,200 people.[467] These figures were obviously revised greatly upward later. On 28 May 1943, the NKVD reported having conscripted 70,780 men and 52,742 women for a total of 123,522 Germans in accordance with GOKO No. 2383ss.[468] The NKVD had managed to find over 60,000 more Germans to mobilize for the labor army.

State Defense Committee
Resolution GOKO No. 2383
From 7 October 1942 Moscow Kremlin

On supplementary mobilization of Germans
for the peoples economy of the USSR

To supplement resolutions GOKO No. 1123ss from 10 January 1942 and No. 1281ss from 14 February 1942 the State Defense Committee RESOLVES:

1. Additionally mobilize in work columns for the whole time of the war all German men ages 15–16 years and 51–55 years inclusively, capable of physical labor, that were resettled from central oblasts of the USSR and the Republic of the Volga Germans to the confines of the Kazakh SSR and eastern oblasts of the RSFSR, also those living in other oblasts, krais, and republics of the Soviet Union.

2. At the same time undertake the mobilization into work columns for the whole time of the war German women between the ages of 16 to 45.

Free from mobilization German women who are pregnant and have children of the ages less than three years old.

3. Those having children older than three years of age are to give them over for rearing to remaining members of the family. Those lacking other family members, except those mobilized, are to give over their children to be reared by close relatives or German kolkhoz workers.

Requires the local Soviet of workers' deputies to implement measures to accommodate children of mobilized Germans left without parents.

467 Bugai 1998, doc. 55, p. 78.
468 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 110, l. 126.

4. The conduct of the mobilization of the Germans is to be entrusted to the NKO and NKVD with the involvement of local organs of Soviet power.
The mobilization is to start immediately and finish within a month.
5. Obligates all Germans to appear at collection points with proper winter clothing, a supply of underwear, bedding, a cup, a spoon, and a 10 day supply of food.
6. Establishes criminal accountability for conscripted Germans who do not show up to the collection points for mobilization and willfully leave work or desert the work column—by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from 26. XII—1941. "On the accountability of workers and employees in military industrial enterprises for willfully leaving these enterprises."
7. German men mobilized by order of this present resolution are to be transferred to work in enterprises of the trusts "Cheliabugol'" and "Karagandaugol'" in the People's Commissariat of Coal.
Mobilized German women are to be transferred to enterprises in the People's Commissariat of Oil.
8. Requires the NKPS (Comrade Khulev) and the administration of military communications of the NKO (Comrade Kovalev) to supply transport for the mobilized Germans according to the orders of the NKO and NKVD.
9. Requires the People's Commissariat of Oil USSR and People's Commissariat of Coal USSR to provide for the reception, distribution and rational use of the transferred workforce of mobilized Germans.
Expenses in relationship to the mobilization and transport of the mobilized to places of designation are to be taken from calculated estimates of the People's Commissariat of Coal and People's Commissariat of Oil.
10. Requires the People's Commissariat of Trade USSR (Comrade Liubimov) to supply food to the mobilized in transit.
11. The NKVD USSR and NKO are to report to the State Defense Committee about the results of the mobilization of the Germans and the number of Germans transferred to enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Coal and the People's Commissariat of Oil.

Chairman of the State
Defense Committee
Stalin[469]

This third wave of conscription included women as well as men. It also assigned a large number of the draftees to work in the civilian commissariats of coal and oil rather than in NKVD ITLs (Corrective Labor Camps). The mobilization decree sent men to work for enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Coal and women to work in various enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Oil

469 RGASPI F. 644, o. 1, d. 61, ll. 138–140.

throughout the Soviet Union.[470] One of the destinations of the men sent to work was Karaganda, Kazakhstan. A number of the oil enterprises to employ German women conscripted into the labor army were located in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Kazakhstan and Central Asia thus received a number of Germans mobilized into labor army detachments.

German labor army detachments working in the People's Commissariat of Coal, People's Commissariat of Oil, and other civilian commissariats differed somewhat from those working directly in NKVD camps. They worked in the same facilities as free workers and came under the control of the local NKVD administration or UNKVD rather than directly under NKVD GULag. The regime for labor army recruits in civilian commissariats was thus less strict than for those in NKVD camps and construction sites. The men and women working in these places came under the rule, guard and supply norms of GULag and had very few rights that distinguished them from convicted prisoners. Certainly their labor regimen and rations of foods and other stuffs did not differ.[471] Nonetheless, the men and women sent to work in civilian commissariats still constituted forced laborers living under the supervision of the NKVD. In total 182,000 Germans worked in NKVD camps and construction sites and 133,000 in civilian commissariats between 1942 and 1945.[472] This substantial work force had a significant presence in the objects of the NKVD, People's Commissariat of Coal, and People's Commissariat of Oil.

The fall 1942 wave of inductions into the labor army for work in the coal and oil industries included a substantial number of men and women from Kazakhstan. Between 7 October and 3 December 1942, Kazakhstan had contributed an additional 9,642 German men and 9,250 German women to the labor army.[473] As

470 RGASPI F. 644, o. 1, d. 61, ll. 138–140.

471 German, "Sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh NKVD v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny: Vklad v pobedy," p. 282.

472 German, "Mobilizovannye sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh NKVD I na khoziaistvennykh ob'ektakh drugikh narkomatov v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny," table 1, p. 173.

473 Karpykova, doc 74, pp. 131–133.

noted in the mobilization decree the NKVD sent most of the men to work in coal mines and most of the women to work extracting oil.

GKO order 2383ss also led to the conscription of Germans from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan into the labor army. An early plan for mobilizing German men and women into the various enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Oil called for drafting 100 from Kyrgyzstan for construction work on the Ishimbaev Gas Factory in the Bashkir ASSR.[474] A slightly later plan for moving Germans to various work sites of the People's Commissariat of Coal and the People's Commissariat of Oil called for the mobilization of 4,000 Germans from Kyrgyzstan.[475] On 15 October 1942, the NKVD reported that it planned to move 300 German men from Kyrgyzstan to work in coal mines in Chkalov Oblast. This same plan mentioned mobilizing 3,000 German men from Kazakhstan to mine coal in Bogoslov and another 4,000 to work in Chelaibinsk.[476] On 25 November 1942, the NKVD reported actually mobilizing 3,500 Germans into the labor army from Kazakhstan and 455 from Uzbekistan to work in the coal mines of the Kuzbass.[477] By December 1942, the NKVD had mobilized 169 German men and 397 German women in Turkmenistan as well.[478] The Soviet government thus mobilized over a thousand Germans from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan into the labor army during the fall of 1942 in addition to a much larger number from Kazakhstan.

The mass conscription of German men and women into the labor army by the Stalin regime removed many of them from Kazakhstan and Central Asia. By December 1942, the Stalin regime had forcibly mobilized 57,695 Germans living in Kazakhstan into the labor army.[479] A total of 4,101 of these conscripts ended up in

474 Bugai 1998, doc. 56, pp. 79–80.
475 Bugai 1998, doc. 57, pp. 81–82.
476 Bugai 1998, doc. 174, p. 253.
477 Bugai 1998, doc. 183, pp. 259–260.
478 Bugai 1998, doc. 217, pp. 288–289.
479 Karpykova, doc. 76, pp. 135–136.

Karaganda Oblast by 5 December 1942. Only 99 of these forced laborers had lived in Karaganda prior to being mobilized. The NKVD also sent an additional 4,143 Germans from outside of Kazakhstan and Central Asia to Karaganda to work in the labor army.[480] The coal mines of Karaganda added German labor army conscripts to the other categories of forced laborers already working in the mine shafts.

The exemption of German woman from mobilization was clarified by the NKVD on 23 October 1942. All German women married to Russian men were to be freed from mobilization regardless of their occupation status including military service or party membership. Also exempt from mobilization were Russian women with German husbands and children. Exemptions from mobilization into the labor army for both men and women on the basis of being specialists working in defense enterprises was to be decided by the People's Commissariat of Defense and the Chief of the local UNKVD on the basis of the merits of petitions from the interested organizations. Both German men and women exiled as labor settlers in the Urals in the early 1930s and those deported from Leningrad and other cities in 1935 were subject to mobilization in the labor army.[481]

On 3 December 1942, the NKVD issued "Instructions on the Orderly Use of Mobilized Germans in the Enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Coal" and "Instructions on the Orderly Use of Mobilized Germans in the Enterprises of the People's Commissariat of Oil."[482] The instructions for the coal enterprises was seventeen pages long and had 100 points.[483] The organization of Germans working in the coal industry was similar to that of those mobilized into NKVD camps.

The instructions set forth very clear orders for handling the mobilized Germans used in the mines of the People's Commissariat of Coal. In many ways the instructions are just a much more

480 Karpykova, doc. 75, pp. 134–135.
481 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 68.
482 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, l. 71.
483 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, ll. 72–80.

detailed and longer version of the NKVD instructions first issued to the heads of Corrective Labor Camps for dealing with mobilized Germans on 12 January 1942.[484] The first ten points deal with general issues. The first point noted that they could be used in the commissariat's mines and auxiliary enterprises. The second point strictly prohibited them from handling dynamite and other explosives used in mining coal. The third point dealt with their organization into detachments, columns, and brigades like mobilized Germans in the camps. These various militarized formations of mobilized Germans would be supplemented by skilled free workers. The fourth point stressed the need to impose strict discipline upon the mobilized Germans. The fifth point dealt with the Communist Party conducting political work among the Germans to maximize the growth of the Stakhanovite movement and the fulfillment of quotas. The sixth point made the head of each detachment and his deputy responsible for making sure the mobilized Germans did not express any type of opposition to the regime including sabotage, diversion, or shirking. Pro-fascist elements were to be ruthlessly uprooted. Point seven extolled the head of each detachment and his deputy to take all necessary measures to prevent desertions by the mobilized Germans. Point eight is on preventing any possibility of the mobilized Germans from interacting with the local population. Point nine ordered clarification work among the free workers coming into contact with the mobilized Germans about the need to avoid fraternization and close relations with the labor army conscripts. The final general point was about the need to organize in the mines and enterprises with mobilized Germans armed guards of the NKVD (VOKHR).[485] The emphasis on surveillance, security, and control that the NKVD exercised over the mobilized Germans in its Corrective Labor Camps was also extended to those it supervised working in the People's Commissariat of Coal.

484 GARF F. 9401, O. 1a, D. 110, ll. 10–12.
485 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 112, ll. 72–72 ob.

The rest of the instructions were subdivided among 14 additional sections dealing with more specific aspects of using mobilized Germans as a work force in the People's Commissariat of Coal. These sections were organization, internal order, labor utilization, payment for work, communal living and everyday maintenance, supply of food and goods, cultural services, medical services, rights and obligations of mobilized Germans, encouragements and the order of their application, disciplinary penalties and the order of their execution, the organization of the guards, reception of mobilized Germans, and finally other orders.[486] The basic structure of the mobilized Germans in work brigades working for the People's Commissariat of Coal closely resembled that imposed upon those assigned to NKVD camps and construction projects.

The expansion of the use of mobilized Germans to work in civilian commissariats remained concentrated in the coal and oil industries. But, a large number of civilian commissariats in the USSR ended up using smaller numbers of German labor army conscripts during the war. The NKVD issued detailed sets of instructions similar to the ones used to regulate the labor army in its corrective labor camps for each of the commissariats that employed mobilized Germans.[487] In Kazakhstan and Central Asia the People's Commissariat of Coal employed mobilized German men in Karaganda and women in various oil trusts in Krasnovodsk[488] Turkmenistan and Vannovskie Uzbekistan. The employment of mobilized women in the oil and other industries in the USSR was limited to the Germans. Even among other deport-

486 GARF F 9479, O. 1, D. 112, ll. 72 ob.–80.

487 Bugai, 1998, doc. 113, pp. 147–159, doc. 117, pp. 164–170, doc. 119, p. 170–177, doc. 120, pp. 177–183, and doc. 121, pp. 183–190.

488 Today Krasnovodsk (Red Water) is called Turkmenbashi (Father of the Turkmen) the formal title the first post-Soviet ruler of Turkmenistan gave himself in emulation of Ataturk (Father of the Turks). It was the first city in Russian ruled Central Asia to have a railroad station. It has rich oil, gas, and fishing resources immediately off the coast in the Caspian Sea and generates considerable income in the summer from internal tourism, primarily from the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat. Foreign tourism in Turkmenistan still remains extremely restricted even by the closed standards of Central Asia.

ed and enemy peoples the NKVD did not harness the work of women into the labor army.

While the labor army spread into various civilian commissariats, there was a consolidation of rail workers under direct NKVD control. In October 1942, the NKPS also transferred to the NKVD the surviving labor army men it had received for the construction of railways in the first two inductions of Germans. Future rail construction by the labor army took place under the auspices of the NKVD not the NKPS.[489]

In addition to mobilizing Germans living in Central Asia to work in the Urals, the 7 October 1942 decree also led to the transfer of men from Siberia to Kazakhstan. The NKVD initially planned to mobilize and move 4,000 men from Novosibirsk, 4,000 from Omsk and 100 from Irkutsk to the Karaganda coal fields in Kazakhstan.[490] The total number of Germans mobilized to work in the Karaganda coal mines, however, reached only about 6,000. This was a much smaller number than the numbers that worked in the Urals at Bogoslov and Bakalstroi on construction or at Ivdel felling trees.

The NKVD operated two large labor camp complexes in Kazakhstan that made extensive use of the forced labor of Germans conscripted into the labor army. Aktiubinsklag in Aktiubinsk Oblast employed 1,595 labor army men already by January 1942. In April 1942 it absorbed the nearby Kimpersailag complex. In October 1941, Kimpersailag had received some of the first men inducted into the labor army from Ukraine and the Red Army. The Aktiubinsklag complex concentrated on activities related to the production of steel. In particular forced labor from these camps engaged in the construction of metallurgy combines and the mining of iron, chrome, and especially nickel. The Karaganda labor camp complex (Karlag) also used labor army conscripts in section number four to mine coal. Germans arrived in mobilized columns to work in Karaganda at the end of 1943 and reached 792 men and

489 German, "Sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh," p. 282.
490 Bugai 1998, doc. 174, p. 253.

488 women by January 1944. After their demobilization from the labor army in January 1946, the Stalin regime continued to employ them in extracting coal as special settlers attached to the mine.[491] Like in the Urals, the corrective labor camps in Aktiubinsk and Karaganda also utilized the forced labor of Germans for industrial construction and mining. Karaganda in particular became a large industrial complex with a surrounding agricultural area. Much of the labor for this complex and its support structure came from prisoners, labor army conscripts, and special settlers.

**Table 18: Number of German labor army conscripts in NKVD camps in Kazakhstan, 1942–1945.[492]**

| Date | Aktiubinsklag | Karlag | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| January 1942 | 1,595 | NA | 1,595 |
| January 1943 | 1,580 | NA | 1,580 |
| January 1944 | 1,635 | 1,280 (488 women) | 2,915 |
| January 1945 | 195 | NA | 195 |

In addition to those mining coal in Karlag, the Stalin regime also conscripted a large number of Germans to work in the Karaganda coal fields in the People's Commissariat of Coal starting in October 1942. In total the Karaganda Coal combine employed 3,836 mobilized Germans. These men suffered from extreme shortages of proper clothing among other things. According to one official report, "Special clothes have not been issued. Their clothes have in the majority of cases been worn out to the degree that a section of the Germans are completely unclothed …"[493] Only 1,044 (27.2%) had exterior clothes, 537 (14%) shoes, and 1,215 (31.7%) underwear.[494] Thus a large section of the German coal miners in Karaganda literally had been reduced to being naked.

Unlike convicted prisoners, mobilized Germans were supposed to receive wages on the same basis as free workers. But, this did nothing significant to improve their standard of living in

491 German, "Sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh," pp. 292–298.
492 German, "Sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh," pp. 292–298.
493 German and Kurochkin, p. 110.
494 German and Kurochkin, p. 110.

comparison to prisoners. First, this system was only implemented on 1 October 1943.[495] Second, the norms of actual food rations and other provisions for the labor army conscripts were set as equal to prisoners.[496] Even these minimal supplies could often not be provided due to shortages due to the war and corruption and theft by officials. Finally, prices set for mobilized Germans for food, clothing, and other necessities were much higher than that of free workers.[497] Often the amount of money needed for food and clothing exceeded these wages. In Ivdellag mobilized Germans received between 30 to 350 rubles a month with a median wage of 120–130 rubles a month. The amount of money deducted from these wages for food and other necessities, however, was 140–150 rubles a month.[498] This was a common problem for many men and women in the labor army. Mobilized Germans in the coal industry in Kazakhstan also complained that the cost of food and clothes exceeded their wages in 1944.[499] Hence labor army conscripts often did not have enough money to buy their full ration as opposed to convicted prisoners whom received it automatically. Both convicted prisoners and mobilized Germans lacked access to the kitchen plots on kolkhozes that provided 85%–90% of the food consumed during World War II.[500] This basic fact alone accounted for much of their higher rates of death than free workers during the war.

By 1 January 1944, the number of Germans mobilized to work for the People's Commissariat of Coal, People's Commissariat of Oil, and People's Commissariat of Munitions under NKVD supervision had risen to almost 100,000. This included 56,551

495 Irina Mukhina, "To Be Alike But Different: Germans in Soviet *Trudarmee*," *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 63, no. 5, July 2011, p. 862.
496 GARF Fond 9401, O. 1a, D. 110, ll. 8–11.
497 Mukhina, "To be alike but different," pp. 864–865.
498 N.V. Matveeva, "Vliianie uslovii truda i zhizni na vnutrennii mir rossiiskikh nemtsev-trudarmeitsev v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," in Grazhdanskaia identichnost'i vnutren-nii mir rossiiskikh nemtsev v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny i v istoricheskoi pamiati potomkov, ed. A.A. German. Moscow: MSNK-press, 2011, 150.
499 Karpykova, doc. 82, p. 142.
500 Mukhina, "To be alike all but different," p. 864.

Germans working in various coal trusts and combines in Siberia, the Urals, Kazakhstan, and the Moscow region. The largest of these basins in terms of workers was the Tula Coal Combine with 9,559 mobilized Germans followed by the Kuzbass in Siberia with 9,052. The Karaganda Coal Combine had 3,836 German labor army conscripts. The deadliest of these civilian commissariats for the labor army was Cheliabinsk Coal Combine with 1,014 of the registered 2,844 total deaths among mobilized Germans for the People's Commissariat of Coal. A total of 8,800 German labor army inductees worked at Cheliabinsk Coal Combine at the start of 1944.[501] Along with the presence of Bakallag, Cheliabinsk became a major population center for Germans in the labor army.

**Table 19: Mobilized Germans working for the People's Commissariat of Coal 1-1-44[502]**

| Enterprise | Number | Total Loss | Deserted | Demobilized | Deaths | Convicted | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moscow Coal | 7,127 | 2,285 | 163 | 479 | 231 | 311 | 1051 |
| Molotov Coal | 7,121 | 564 | 147 | 144 | 138 | 55 | 80 |
| Bogoslov Coal | 3,983 | 992 | 146 | 205 | 500 | 28 | 113 |
| Bogoslov Coal Construction | 903 | 1 | ----- | 1 | ----- | ----- | |
| Tula Coal | 9,559 | 1,522 | 135 | 464 | 704 | 219 | |
| Chelyabinsk Coal | 8,800 | 5,630 | 2,919 | 1,012 | 1,014 | 94 | 591 |
| Chkalov Coal | 157 | 30 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 10 | 4 |
| Karaganda Coal | 3,836 | 1,139 | 699 | 199 | 140 | 80 | 21 |
| Kemerovo Coal | 5,993 | 145 | 62 | 21 | 26 | 19 | 152 |
| Kuzbass Coal | 9,052 | 318 | 179 | 71 | 34 | 58 | 56 |
| Siberian Coal | 11 | 8 | 8 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Khakass Coal | 9 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Total | 56,551 | 12,723 | 4,474 | 2,635 | 2,844 | 898 | 1,872 |

The next largest civilian commissariat to employ mobilized Germans under NKVD supervision was the People's Commissariat of Oil. On 1 January 1944 it had 30,250 German labor army conscripts working at its various enterprises. The largest by far being Kuibyshev Oil Combine with 10,663 such conscripts. The next largest was Bashkir Oil Combine with 5,596 mobilized Germans. The

501 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, d. 1207, l. 3.
502 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, d. 1207, l. 3.

deadliest of these enterprises was Kuibyshev with 142 out of a total of 342 recorded deaths.[503] These numbers for deaths are probably understated. But, they do show the relatively less lethal nature of the oil industry compared to coal mining.

Finally, the People's Commissariat of Munitions (NKB) had 8,021 German labor army conscripts working in its enterprises on 1 January 1944. The largest was Combine 179 with 1,546 followed by Factory No. 65 with 809. Factory No. 564 was the deadliest with 37 deaths out of 666 labor army conscripts. The total number of deaths in the NKB among mobilized Germans was 88.[504] There is widespread speculation among the women that were mobilized to work in factory 179 that many of the 931 losses recorded under desertion were in fact deaths.

**Table 20: Mobilized Germans Working for the Peoples' Commissariat of Munitions 1-1-44[505]**

| Enterprise | Number | Total Loss | Deserted | Demobilized | Died | Convicted | Transferred |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 260 | 487 | 6 | ---- | 4 | 1 | 1 | ---- |
| 72 | 683 | 125 | 128 | 2 | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 76 | 149 | 21 | ---- | 19 | 2 | ---- | ---- |
| 68 | 186 | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 63 | 512 | 1 | ---- | ---- | 1 | ---- | ---- |
| 257 | 138 | 12 | 11 | 1 | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 322 | 218 | 13 | 8 | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 65 | 809 | 627 | 537 | 70 | 11 | 9 | ---- |
| 564 | 666 | 99 | 45 | 9 | 37 | ---- | ---- |
| 677 | 548 | 47 | 44 | 1 | 2 | ---- | ---- |
| 556 | 336 | 209 | 208 | 1 | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 179 | 1546 | 994 | 931 | 52 | 11 | ---- | 59 |
| 239 | 198 | 11 | 8 | 3 | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 62 | 388 | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| 78 | 561 | 60 | 35 | 16 | 9 | ---- | ---- |
| 144 | 596 | 79 | 37 | 20 | 14 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 8,021 | 2,204 | 1,864 | 178 | 88 | 14 | 68 |

Between 1941 and 1 May 1945 the NKVD mobilized a total of 71,977 Germans from Kazakhstan. The largest groups of these

503 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 4.
504 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 5.
505 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 5.

inductees came from North Kazakhstan and Pavlodar Oblast.[506] This number represented about 23% of the total number of Germans conscripted into the labor army during World War II. The largest concentration of Germans in the labor army worked in the various camps and enterprises in the Urals. Other detachments worked in Siberia, the Russian Far East, the Russian Far North, and other remote regions of the USSR.

**Table 21: Location of Mobilized Germans from Kazakhstan during World War II[507]**

| Oblast | Number of Germans |
|---|---|
| Alma-Ata | 2,860 |
| Jambul | 2,723 |
| South Kazakhstan | 4,368 |
| Kyzyl-Orda | 24 |
| North Kazakhstan | 18,289 |
| Akmola | 4,887 |
| Karaganda | 6,162 |
| Pavlodar | 15,104 |
| Semipalatinsk | 8,164 |
| East Kazakhstan | 9,396 |
| Total | 71,977 |

The completion of the construction of Volzhlag at the end of 1942 led to the transfer of their healthy workers to Shiroklag. A 15 December 1942 report by the Deputy Chief of Volzhlag Zaikin to GULag Chief Nasedkin noted that the NKVD medical commission at the camp had diagnosed 450 invalids. Initially on 30 October 1942 GULag had banned the demobilization of invalids from the camps. But, on 21 November 1942 GULag authorized a number of camps to release invalided mobilized Germans from work columns. In the course of November 1942 already 30 of these 450 invalids died. He concluded that it was not possible to transfer the remaining invalids to places of work and that they needed to be quickly demobilized.[508] Deaths of invalids in the camps were

506 Karpykova, doc. 84, pp. 143–144.
507 Karpykova, doc. 84, pp. 143–144.
508 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, l. 150.

much more expensive for GULag than those that had already been released.

The NKVD divided the mobilized Germans into four categories for work. Category A consisted of able bodied workers employed in heavy labor, B were service workers and trustees, C were sick and invalids unable to work, and D were workers prevented from performing labor due to undergoing punishment. In Ivdellag alone during the first half of 1943 the NKVD registered 10,010 sick mobilized Germans. Most of these illnesses were quite serious and over half a result of malnutrition, particularly a lack of protein and vitamin C. The NKVD divided the illnesses between 4,129 cases of pellegra, 1,143 cases of scurvy, 550 cases of tuberculosis, 129 cases of gastro-intestinal disease, 136 cases of circulatory disease, 251 cases of lung disease, and 2,482 other diagnoses.[509] Like in Viatlag the mobilized Germans in Ivdellag suffered from a severe lack of protein and vitamin C.

**Table 22: Physical Conditions of Mobilized Germans, 1942–1944[510]**

| Date | Group A | Group B | Group C | Group D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 July 1942 | 83.1% | 4.3% | 11.5% | 1.1% |
| 1 January 1943 | 66% | 5.5% | 25.9% | 2.6% |
| 1 July 1943 | 78.8% | 4.8% | 15% | 1.4% |
| 1 January 1944 | 82.9% | 4.6% | 11.6% | 0.9% |
| 1 July 1944 | 84.2% | 4.4% | 10.5% | 0.9% |

The recorded deaths among the mobilized Germans in NKVD corrective labor camps were high, but incomplete. A recorded total of 19,494 mobilized Germans entered Bogoslov camp during 1942 and the authorities tabulated 2,187 deaths among them for that year. This does not count deaths among the 4,140 released for various reasons. The deadliest months were June with 272, February with 266, and January with 200.[511] Viatlag had 7,034 mobilized

509 A.N. Kurochkin, "'Trudamiia': Istoriografiia i istochniki," in *Rossiiskie nemtsy: Istoriografiia i istochnikovedenie*. Moscow: IVDK, 1997, p. 131.

510 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 38.

511 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 3-3 ob.

Germans arrive in 1942 and 768 die during that year.[512] Ivdellag had 15,723 arrive and 1,796 die in 1942.[513] Nizhny Tagil had 4,243 arrive and 209 die in 1942.[514] The Northern Railroad had 1,185 recorded deaths out of 7,219 mobilized Germans.[515] Solikamsk had 1,727 deaths out of 12,936 arriving mobilized Germans.[516] Bakalstroi the camp with the largest number of German labor army conscripts registered 2,727 deaths in 1942 or 9.9% of the contingent's population in January 1943.[517] Other camps had lower recorded mortality figures. Some had such low recorded mortality figures that one suspects that for the most part the camp authorities did not pay attention to properly registering deaths among mobilized Germans in the camps. In fact the chief of OURZ, GULag, Granovskii had already accused the NKVD officers in charge of the camps of precisely this malfeasance on 31 August 1942 and noted the extremely incomplete nature of the mortality data among mobilized Germans they had submitted.[518] Nevertheless the total mortality rate for the 13 camps below which does not include Bakal, the largest site for labor army conscripts still shows 8,493 deaths, a 7.4% mortality rate for 1942. Adding the deaths for Bakallag brings the figures up to 11,220 deaths.

512 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 6-6 ob.
513 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 7-7 ob.
514 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 9-9 ob.
515 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 11-11 ob.
516 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 13-13 ob.
517 Krieger et al., p. 19.
518 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1157, ll. 149–149 ob.

**Table 23: Number of Recorded Deaths among Mobilized Germans in NKVD Camps 1942[519]**

| Name of Camp | Number of Mobilized Germans | Number of Deaths |
|---|---|---|
| Bogoslov | 19,494 | 2,187 |
| Volga | 24,738 | 152 |
| East Ural | 5,445 | 84 |
| Viatlag | 7,034 | 768 |
| Ivdel | 15,723 | 1,796 |
| Kraslag | 5,937 | 64 |
| Nizhny Tagil | 4,253 | 209 |
| Saratov | NA | 127 |
| North Railroad | 6,489 | 1,185 |
| North Ural | 9,394 | 89 |
| Solikamsk | 12,936 | 1,727 |
| Tavdin | 2,015 | 83 |
| Umaltinsky | 1,439 | 22 |
| Total | 114,897 | 8,493 |

Other tabulations have come up with different numbers. German and Kurochkin give a total figure of 11,874 mobilized Germans perishing in NKVD camps during 1942 out of a total of 115,000 or 10.6%.[520] They give percentages, but not absolute numbers for deaths in individual camps. These are North Rail Road 20.8%, Solikamsk 19%, Tavdin 17.9%, Bogoslov 17.2%, Volga 1.1%, Kraslag 1.2%, Vosturallag 1.6%, and and Umaltlag 1.6%.[521] Kirillov and Mateeva come up with slightly different figures. They list nine camps with 104,919 mobilized Germans coming in 1942, 113,634 for 1941 and 1942 combined.[522] Out of these mobilized Germans they listed 8,773 or 8.6% perishing in the camps in 1942. The figures for two of the camps they included, Solikamsk and Vosturralg are incomplete so they speculate the actual numbers for the nine camps is above 9,000. The individual camp differences between their count and mine are as follows. They give Bogoslov at 2,264 using the deaths from the database of deaths from the

519 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1172, ll. 3–15.
520 German and Kurochkin, p. 114.
521 German and Kurochkin, p. 115.
522 Kirillov and Mateeva, p. 633.

memory books. They also give Solikamsk at only 824 instead of 1,727 noting that they are only counting the first six months of 1942. They give no numbers for Vosturallag versus the 84 in the table above. The biggest difference for accounting in their higher total is the inclusion of 2,727 deaths for Bakallag, a camp that does not appear in the incomplete lists I obtained from the GARF archives.[523] They also provide percentages which differ from German and Kurochkin adjusting for the incomplete numbers they estimated the total losses of 1942 at 8.9% and the following for individual camps: Bogoslovlag 11.6%, Ivdellag 11.4%, Usollag 11%, Bakallag 7.9%, Tagillag 4.9%, Solikamsklag 6.4%, (first six months only), and Tavdinlag 4.1%.[524] These figures, however, are still certainly incomplete. A comparison of registered deaths among Germans in the labor army with the number of names in memory books shows fewer deaths in the official NKVD death statistics. For instance in Bogoslovlag the number of registered deaths for all of 1942 is 2,187, but the number of names in the camp's memory book based upon a count of individuals known to have died there shows 2,265 deaths for the year. This is a difference of 78. Other camps show similar discrepancies. For instance Usol'lag had 781 official deaths for 1942 and 925 deaths compiled by individual count, a difference of 134. Tagillag had only 203 deaths recorded by the NKVD in 1942 but, 302 in its memory book.[525] It appears that a more accurate accounting of deaths in the labor army can only be reached by tabulating the individual victims of each camp. This tedious process has already been started by *Memorial* and other organizations working in Russia.

Not included here is the large number of mobilized Germans released in 1942 as invalids that died shortly after leaving the camps. Kirillov and Mateeva note that the total number of Germans to leave the nine camps in their tabulations during 1942 was 30,238 of which 8,773 are verified deaths in the camps.[526] They do

523 Kirillov and Mateeva, p. 634.
524 Kirillov and Mateeva, p. 641.
525 Krieger, "Zwangsarbeitslager," pp. 145–146.
526 Kririllov and Mateeva, p. 634.

not note the breakdown of these other losses so the number of invalids is not given.

A report from 28 May 1943 from Chief of the OURZ GULag NKVD Chief, Colonel of State Security Granovskii gives an official tabulation of the number of Germans mobilized by the three orders of 1123ss, 1281ss, and 2383ss into the labor army. The first two orders had mobilized 115,660 men for work in camps and construction sites of the NKVD. Another 25,000 had been mobilized to work for the NKPS building rail lines. The total number of men inducted thus came to 140,660. This represented the majority of Germans mobilized into the labor army by Spring 1943. The 7 October 1942 decree, 2383ss mobilized a total of 123,522 people into camps and construction sites of the NKVD as well as to work for various other Peoples Commissariats such as coal, oil, and munitions. This number was divided between 70,780 men, those 15–16 and 50–55, that had not been included in the first two mobilization orders and 52,742 women. In total the three mobilization orders conscripted a total of 264,182 Germans. The vast majority of these inductees, 211,440 were men.[527] The men and women mobilized under GKO Orders 1123ss and 2383ss were special settlers while the men mobilized under GKO Order 1281ss were not. This accounts in part for an alternative set of numbers on German special settlers mobilized into the labor army and moved to construction, coal, and oil industries. A 27 May 1943 report to A.A. Andreev of the CC of the CPSU (B) by Deputy Chairman of the NKVD Chernyshov puts the number of such people as 159,000 men and 84,000 women for a total of 243,000 people.[528] The much higher number of male conscripts as well as the higher mortality rate in the labor army would create another gender imbalance over representing women among the Germans in the areas of special settlement in Kazakhstan and Siberia.

527 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 110, l. 126.
528 RGASPI F. 17, O. 121, D. 241, l. 60.

**Table 24: Mobilization of Germans by 1942 GKO Order[529]**

| Mobilization Order | NKVD (Coal & Oil) | NKPS | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1123ss & 1281ss | 115,660 | 25,000 | 140,660 | None |
| 2383ss | 123,522 | None | 70,780 | 52,742 |
| Total | 239,182 | 25,000 | 211,440 | 52,742 |

Shortly after mobilizing German men 15–16 and 50–55 and German women the GKO ordered the mobilization of Soviet citizens of other nationalities in the Axis. Resolution No. GOKO-2409ss of 14 October 1942 ordered the mobilization into labor columns of ethnic Romanian, Hungarian, Italian, and Finnish men aged 17 to 50 along the same lines as German men inducted according to GOKO No. 1123ss and 1281ss.[530] The number of Hungarians, Italians, and Romanians mobilized under this order were few. The NKO managed to mobilize a greater number of Finns. But, their percentage of the labor army was still minor compared to the Germans. Later, the Soviet government would mobilize Koreans in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan into the labor army.

The three mass mobilizations of Germans in the USSR during 1942 mostly exhausted the number of able bodied adults among the population that could be later inducted for forced labor. The conscription of Germans into the labor army during 1943 was much more limited. Throughout 1943 another three smaller induction waves conscripted around 30,000 ethnic Germans into the labor army. These conscription waves were a result of GKO Order No. 3095 of 26 April 1943, GKO Order No. 3857 of 2 August 1943, and GOKO Order No. 3960 of 19 August 1943. The Soviet government assigned these men and women to work in GULag camps and civilian enterprises dealing with the extraction of coal, oil, gold, and other resources.[531] In total the Stalin regime conscripted the vast majority of the able bodied adult population of Germans

529 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 110, l. 126. For GKO Orders 1123ss and 1281ss all of the men mobilize worked for objects of the NKVD. For GKO Order 2383ss many of the men were mobilized for the People's Commissariat of Coal and many of the women were mobilized for the People's Commissariat of Oil.

530 RGASPI Fond 644, o. 1, d. 64, l. 24.

531 German and Kurochkin 1998, pp. 63–64.

in the USSR into the labor army. On 19 August 1943, Stalin issued GOKO 3960ss ordering the mobilization of 25,000 people to work in the labor army mining coal including 7,000 Germans in Kazakhstan and Siberia.[532] On 25 August 1943 this number was almost doubled to 13,000 plus an additional 2,000 to work in tank factories. The NKVD assigned the additional 6,000 Germans mobilized to dig coal to the Vorkuta labor camp north of the Arctic Circle. Most of these mobilized were women, 9,800 and only 5,200 were men. The majority of Germans of this latest mobilization came from Kazakhstan and not Siberia.[533] These mobilized Germans started arriving in Vorkuta in May 1943 and reached nearly 7,000 by early 1944. Like other Germans conscripted to work in camps as part of the labor army they lived in run down barracks behind barbed wire. They mostly worked in the coal mines and some 400 perished in 1944.[534] The 1943 mobilizations were a small fraction of the 1942 inductions.

**Table 25: Location of Germans Mobilized by GKO Order 3960ss, 1943[535]**

| Territory Mobilized From | Number of Men | Number of Women |
|---|---|---|
| Kazakh SSR | 3,000 | 5,500 |
| Omsk Oblast | 1,000 | 2,000 |
| Novosibirsk Oblast | 500 | 1,000 |
| Kemerovo Oblast | 200 | 300 |
| Krasnoiarsk Krai | 500 | 1,000 |
| Total | 5,200 | 9,800 |

The camp with the most mobilized Germans throughout the war remained Bakalstroi also known as the Cheliabinsk Metallurgy Combine Construction site. On 1 December 1943 it had 20,810 mobilized Germans versus 12,091 convicted prisoners, and 4,064 mobilized Central Asians. A month later on 1 January 1944 these numbers had decreased slightly to 20,648 mobilized Germans,

532 Bugai 1998, doc. 25, pp. 47–48.
533 Bugai 1998, doc. 27, p. 50.
534 Alan Barenberg, *Gulag Town, Company Town: Forced Labor and its Legacy in Vorkuta.* New Haven, University of Yale Press, 2014, p. 79.
535 Bugai 1998, doc. 27, p. 50.

11,482 convicted prisoners, and 3,382 mobilized Central Asians for a total of 35,512 workers.[536] The camp thus had as many forced laborers of various kinds as a small city or large university has inhabitants today.

The deaths in 1943 continued to be high among mobilized Germans in the corrective labor camps (ITLs) of GULag. Kirillov and Mateeva are one of the few sources to provide mortality data for 1943. German and Kurochkin do not provide any. Kirillov and Mateeva note that on 1 January 1943 there were 121,053 mobilized Germans in GULag camps in the whole of the USSR and that this number had decreased to 105,012 by the end of the year. Out of this net loss of 16,041 people 11,561 were recorded deaths in the camps. Releases constituted 22,349 people out of a total number of losses of 62,036.[537] The deaths in camps in 1943 constituted 6.9% of the mobilized Germans.[538] The NKVD, however, released a huge percentage of mobilized Germans as invalids from certain camps, the majority of whom later died either on the road or as special settlers before the end of 1955. The invalid releases for 1943 alone constituted 11.4% of the mobilized Germans in Tavdinlag, 30% in Bogoslovlag, and 30.5% of Bakallag.[539] It is these unrecorded deaths among those released as invalids that makes estimating the exact number of mobilized Germans like that of GULag prisoners that perished as a result of working in the camps as opposed to those that actually died in the camps very difficult.

The mass mobilization of German women into the labor army left many children without anybody to care for them in Kazakhstan, Siberia and other areas of special settlement. The decree noted that children older than three of conscripted women were to be given to remaining family members to rear. If all adult family members had been mobilized into the labor army then the children were to be given to close relatives or German kolkhozes. The resolution further obligated the local Soviets to take measures to

536 GARF F. R-9414, O. 1, D. 1183, ll. 127–128.
537 Kirillov and Matveeva, p. 635.
538 Kirillov and Mateeva, p. 655.
539 Kirillov and Mateeva, p. 654.

accommodate children deprived of their parents due to mobilization in the labor army.[540] The problem of what to do with children of Germans mobilized into labor army, however, proved difficult to solve. The inductions into the labor army were so massive that very few physically capable adult Germans remained in the areas of special settlement. Most of the remaining adult population consisted of men over 55, women over 45, and invalids. Thus many children had no relatives left that could look after them following the induction of their parents into the labor army.

The instructions on conscripting women into the labor army and providing for their children remaining in areas of special settlement prompted a flood of questions on implementation by local NKVD officials to the leadership. On 21 October 1942, Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Kruglov issued a report to Beria with a series of questions from lower level officials regarding the exact categories of German women subject to mobilization in the labor army and the leadership's answers. This clarification noted that German women deported to special settlements in the Urals as kulaks in the 1930s as well as those exiled from Leningrad in 1935 were subject to labor conscription. Those few German women with Russian husbands, however, were exempt from induction. The decision on whether to conscript German women with specialized technical skills needed in local industries and institutions would be decided on a case by case basis. In cases where all adults in a family had been conscripted their personal property would be handed over to close relatives. If they did not have any relatives then it would be placed under the custody of the kolkhoz or local Soviet and a receipt issued. In cases where women with three or more children had been mobilized and they had no family members to care for them then the Chief of the appropriate UNKVD could free them from labor mobilization. The NKVD did not at this time desire to transfer the children of mobilized special settlers to other kolkhozes or orphanages.[541] The extent of the mobi-

540 Bugai 1998, doc. 21, pp. 43–44.
541 Bugai 1998, doc. 23, pp. 45–46.

lization, however, made these latter two options unavoidable. Soon the local soviet authorities found it necessary to transfer German children of men and women conscripted into the labor army to kolkhozes inhabited and worked by people of other nationalities.

In response to the problems of abandoned property and children resulting from the mass conscription of Germans living in Kazakhstan into the labor army, the SNK of the USSR passed resolution 1843-861s on 18 November 1942. This decree dealt with three problems. The first one was the depopulation of former German kolkhozes. The decree called for the re-population of these kolkhozes from other kolkhozes in Kazakhstan. The new settlers were to be assigned sections of households that they desired. If necessary the former German kolkhozes were to be merged with adjacent Kazakh or Russian kolkhozes. The second problem tackled by the decree was the abandonment of private livestock by Germans conscripted into the labor army. The decree resolved to transfer these animals to kolkhozes devoted to raising livestock. The third problem addressed by the decree was what to do with German children whose parents had been mobilized into the labor army. The SNK resolved to place children eight and under in existing children's institutions on Russian and Kazakh kolkhozes. Children over eight were to be placed with Russian and Kazakh families on kolkhozes.[542] The resolution, however, did not allocate any funds for rehousing German orphans. The institutionalization of German children left without parents due to conscription in the labor army soon became a mass phenomenon.

Many women conscripted into the labor army brought their children or younger siblings with them into the labor army barracks and hostels. They judged that these minors would receive better care under these circumstances then they would if abandoned in the special settlement villages or orphanages of Siberia and Kazakhstan. For instance a 114 children between ages three and five lived in the same barracks as their mothers at Factory No.

542 Bugai 1998, doc. 24, p. 47.

65 in the People's Commissariat of Munitions in Novosibirsk. None of them had any shoes or winter clothes and many of them had no clothes at all. They only had three mugs and drank tea from the same small plates they ate off. Due to the unhealthy and unsanitary conditions in the barracks diseases such as measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and rickets spread rapidly among these children.[543] Margarita Ivanovna Funt was one such child. Her sister Roza had taken her to live with her in a hostel in Cheliabinsk rather than abandon her. Their mother had already died and their father had never returned after being arrested in 1937.[544] The informal practice of interning children in labor army barracks thus arose as a way to avoid the complete abandonment of young children who had no family members remaining outside the labor army.

The conscription of German women into the labor army soon created a crisis situation regarding the thousands of children they left behind. By winter 1942 only children, old people, invalids and women with children under three years of age among the Germans remained outside the labor army in any significant numbers.[545] A large number of German children became abandoned in the special settlements as a result of both their parents being conscripted into the labor army. Out of 53,000 German women to serve in the labor army a total of 6,436 mothers had left 8,997 children under 12 in Kazakhstan, Siberia and other locations. Due to the high mortality rates in the labor army a number of these children became orphaned. Between March 1944 and October 1945 the NKVD placed over 2,900 children in orphanages because both their parents perished in the labor army.[546] A large number of Germans lost most of their family members as a result of the inhumane conditions in the labor army.

543 German, "Mobilizovannye," p. 181.
544 Interview with Margarita Ivanovna Funt in Kant on 14 November 2010.
545 Berdinskikh, p. 325.
546 German and Kurochkin, p. 120.

**Table 26: Number of Mobilized Germans in the Labor Army, 1942–1944**[547]

| Date | Number |
|---|---|
| 1 January 1942 | 20,800 |
| 1 July 1942 | 120,772 |
| 1 January 1943 | 122,883 |
| 1 July 1943 | 104,276 |
| 1 January 1944 | 106,669 |
| 1 July 1944 | 107,214 |

**Table 27: Number of Mobilized Germans in NKVD Camps, 1942–1945**[548]

| Camp | Jan 1942 | Jan 1943 | Jan 1944 | Jan 1945 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aktiublag | 1595 | 1580 | 1635 | 195 |
| Altailag | NA | 200[549] | 1865 | 838 |
| Arkhbumstroi | NA | 744[550] | 723 | 373 |
| Bakallag | 28,134 | 27,783 | 20,719 | 19,860 |
| BelBaltlag | NA | NA | 3600[551] | 4096 |
| Bogoslovlag | 12,758 | 12,683 | 8871 | 8603 |
| Volzhlag | 16,712 | 13,115 | 1765 | NA |
| Vorkutlag | NA | NA | 6873 | 6571 |
| Vosturallag | 5252[552] | 5138 | 4992 | 4767 |
| Viatlag | 5444 | 5390 | 3443 | 3707 |
| Dzhidastroi | NA | 1471[553] | 1467 | 1572 |
| Ivdelag | 12,347 | 12,266 | 5613 | 5181 |
| Karlag | NA | NA | 1280 | NA |
| Kraslag | 5313 | 5346 | 4046 | 4224 |
| K.A.Z. | NA | NA | 185 | 185 |
| Pon'shlag | NA | 272 | 273 | 17 |
| Sevvostlag | NA | NA | 594 | 613 |
| Sevzheldorlag | 5727[554] | 5703 | 2418 | 4377 |
| Sevurallag | 4262[555] | 4262 | 4023 | NA |

547 GARF F. 9414, O. 1, D. 1207, l. 38
548 German and Kurochkin, pp. 163–169.
549 This number is for April 1943.
550 This number is for July 1943.
551 This number is for September 1944.
552 This number is for June 1942.
553 This number is for June 1943.
554 This number is for April 1942.
555 This number is for April 1942.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Solikamsk | 9126 | 9089 | 6027 | 5980 |
| Tavdilag | 464 | 467 | 468 | NA |
| Tagillag | 3737[556] | 3717 | 4837 | 4500 |
| Umal'tlag | 1298[557] | 1354 | 1299 | NA |
| Uzhlag | NA | 3401[558] | 3334 | 4531 |
| Usol'lag | 6004[559] | 5967 | 8831 | 7930 |
| Ukhtoizhemlag | NA | NA | 3752 | 5030 |
| Total | 91,893[560] | 114,132[561] | 99,333[562] | 93,150 |

**Table 28: Location of Mobilized Germans used for Work 1 July 1945[563]**

| | |
|---|---|
| Kazakh SSR | 12,787 |
| Kyrgyz SSR | 243 |
| Turkmen SSR | 1,601 |
| Uzbek SSR | 209 |
| Bashkir ASSR | 4,484 |
| Komi ASSR | 1,185 |
| Tatar ASSR | 543 |
| Udmurt ASSR | 822 |
| Altai Krai | 2,502 |
| Khabarovsk Krai | 1,889 |
| Arkhangelsk Oblast | 1,761 |
| Vologoda Oblast | 330 |
| Gorky Oblast | 133 |
| Kirov Oblast | 814 |
| Kemerovo Oblast | 16,668 |
| Kuibyshev Oblast | 5,652 |
| Molotov Oblast | 13,120 |
| Moscow Oblast | 6,752 |
| Novosibirsk Oblast | 4,879 |
| Omsk Oblast | 950 |
| Riazan Oblast | 88 |
| Sverdlovsk Oblast | 9,103 |
| Tula Oblast | 8,691 |

556 This number is for March 1942.
557 This number is for May 1942.
558 This number is for June 1943.
559 This number is for March 1942.
560 This number include only figures for January 1942
561 This number includes only figures for January 1943
562 Does not include BelBaltlag figure
563 Bugai 1998, doc. 71, p. 100.

| | |
|---|---|
| Cheliabinsk Oblast | 12,323 |
| Chkalov Oblast | 6,879 |
| Ul'ianov Oblast | 1,002 |
| Yaroslav Oblast | 231 |
| Total | 115,221 |

The demobilization of the labor army after World War II did not bring freedom for its veterans. Instead the Stalin regime reclassified them as special settlers in 1945 and attached some of them to their places of residence and work.[564] They no longer worked under camp discipline and now had the formal right to have their families come live with them.

One of the first moves to reduce the strictness of the regime imposed upon the mobilized Germans came already before the end of the war against Berlin on 12 April 1945. On that day Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Chernyshov wrote a letter to the heads of Solikamsk and Bogoslov camps relaying the NKVD's decision that the mobilized Germans at these two camps be allowed to invite their families to come join them. Specialists and qualified workers from among the mobilized Germans that had no compromising material against them could now issue invitations to family members to come live with them if there was available housing. The formal invitations would go through the Special Settlement Section of the NKVD-UNKVD for the localities of where their families lived. In the case of family members mobilized in work columns in other NKVD camps the invitations would go through the GULag (Main Administration of Camps) of the NKVD. The letter ends with injunctions to make sure the process of family reunification was gradual and did not overburden the rail resources of the USSR and also not to allow invitations that did not have a realistic chance of being fulfilled including due to a lack of housing to accommodate the arrivals.[565] The overall importance of the Germans as a labor force even motivated the process of their gradual restoration of rights.

564 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 270.
565 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 154, l. 138.

The NKVD returned other men and women released from the labor army to the areas in Siberia and Kazakhstan where they had been exiled in 1941.[566] The process, however, took place over a number of years and even the official liquidation of the labor army took place over a period of many months. The dismantlement of the labor army took place in stages as the Soviet government ordered the liquidation of the restricted camps zones housing mobilized Germans attached to various enterprises during late 1945 and early 1946.[567] The Soviet government first eliminated the labor army in the coal industry. Already on 18 July 1945, the Soviet government granted some German labor army conscripts working in the coal industry the right to move their families to their places of work. Germans working in coal mines located in Moscow Oblast, Leningrad Oblast, Tula Oblast, and the Ukrainian SSR did not receive the right to have their families join them.[568] The formal right to live with their families granted to former labor army members still required each individual worker to receive permission from the relevant NKVD special commandant. Often the commandants did not grant this permission and the families remained divided.[569] On 22 November 1945, the NKVD officially eliminated the "zone" and armed guards for German labor army conscripts working in the coal industry. The former labor army conscripts now officially became special settlers and remained bound by the legislation restricting the rights of this group.[570] Many of them remained working in the same coal mines as special settlers.

The NKVD introduced similar reforms to the labor army contingents working in its corrective labor camps and construction sites on 21 February 1946. This decree released all men over 55 and women over 45 from the labor army, reclassified them as special settlers, and allowed them to join their families in exile if

566 Zemskov 2005, p. 95.
567 Zemskov 2005, p. 127.
568 Tsarevskaia-Diankina, doc. 138, p. 470.
569 Krieger, "Einsatz im Zwangsarbeitslager," p. 156.
570 Tsarevskaia-Diankina, doc. 139, p. 471.

they knew where they lived. The NKVD sent those elderly German labor army veterans who did not know the location of their families to live in Novosibirsk Oblast under special settlement restrictions. The Soviet government also demobilized women and widowers in the labor army with young children living in internal exile without supervision. After being released from the labor army they were allowed to leave the camps and construction sites and join their families elsewhere in the USSR. If their families lived in passport regime areas the Soviet government issued the released labor army conscripts with internal passports having special marks noting their legal status as special settlers. The remaining men under 55 and women under 45 working as labor army conscripts in NKVD camps and construction sites remained in these places of work, but were reclassified as special settlers and allowed to bring their families to join them at their places of residence.[571] Most Germans mobilized to work in labor camps, construction sites, and other industrial concerns continued to work in these same locations after their release from the labor army. They continued to work at these locations under the less onerous, but nonetheless repressive special settlement restrictions.

The mobilized Germans and Crimean Tatars working in the coal mines of Moscow and Tula oblasts and the industrial enterprises of Cheliabinsk and Magnitogorsk did not receive the right to have their families join them until 20 August 1947. On this date the MVD issued Order No. 526 specifying that living quarters be made available to the families of these workers and that their families be given accommodations on trains in order to facilitate reunification.[572] Thus these labor army conscripts did not receive the legal right to live with their families until over two years and three months after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The Stalin regime had mobilized a large number of German special settlers in Kazakhstan and sent them to other regions of the USSR. Male heads of German families constituted a significant

571 Tsarevskaia-Diankina, doc. 140, pp. 471–472.
572 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 141, pp. 472–473.

number of these workers. The mobilization of these men into labor army detachments to work in the coal, iron, timber, and other industries separated thousands of families. The Soviet government sent the mobilized men to work in the Urals, Siberia and other regions of the USSR while their families remained in Kazakhstan. On 5 October 1946, the leader of the special settlement administration of the USSR Col. M. Kuzentsov reported that the total number of German special settlers meeting the above description numbered 17,337 people. The largest number of these men, 7,179 worked in the coal industry followed by 3,212 working in iron works and 2,705 felling and processing timber.[573] The Soviet government only allowed those mobilized Germans working in either the coal or oil industries or working for the MVD to apply to be unified with the families they left behind in Kazakhstan. This category of workers numbered only 9,769 people or 56% of the total. The remaining 7,568 Germans from Kazakhstan working outside of the republic could not apply for family reunification.[574] In addition to the mobilized Germans sent to Siberia and the Urals the Soviet government employed a smaller number of labor army conscripts in industries in Kazakhstan. On 5 October 1946 a total of 9,499 mobilized Germans from 2,636 families worked in Kazakhstan.[575] Thus a total of 26,836 mobilized Germans from Kazakhstan worked in various Soviet industries on 5 October 1946. This, however, was a definite minority of the total number of Germans working in the labor army at the time. Germans native or deported to Siberia formed the majority of the labor army by this time.

By 12 December 1948, the number of mobilized Germans working in various branches of Soviet industry was 124,779 people divided between 76,139 men and 48,640 women. A total of 85,746 of these men and women worked in the coal, oil, fuel, and gold industries. They had been discharged from the labor army and reclassified as special settlers permanently attached to these

573 Eisfeld and Herdt, doc. 279, p. 297.
574 Eisfeld and Herdt, doc. 281, pp. 298–299.
575 Eisfeld and Herdt, doc. 280, pp. 297–298 and doc. 281, pp. 298–299.

industries with the right to reunify with their families by a series of GKO, SNK and Council of Ministers decrees between 13 April 1945 and 28 December 1946. Another 26,219 mobilized Germans working in Moscow, Tula, Gorky, Vologda, and Kuibyshev oblasts who had initially been deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia did not have the right to reunify with their families according to Council of Ministers decree No. 418-161ss of 21 February 1948.[576] Finally, 39,083 worked in 22 assorted ministries including construction, heavy industry, cellulose and paper manufacturing, forestry, manufacturing agricultural equipment, and steel smelting without any kind of legal act attaching them to these industries.[577] The reclassification of labor army conscripts as special settlers increased their numbers by almost 125,000. It also spread some of them throughout industrial areas of the Urals and European parts of the RSFSR.

The return of Germans discharged from the labor army in the late 1940s greatly increased the number of special settlers in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Many labor army veterans returned home to find their families living in desperate material conditions. Anna Kroeker returned home to Kyrgyzstan from the labor army to find the children she was forced to abandon near the brink of death.

> When I returned home after being away for four years, I had found my children living in bitter poverty. We didn't have any beds to speak of. An old pelt was placed on the ground for Lilie and Alfred. The stove had been built in such a way that no one could sit or sleep on any portion of it. There were no dishes—the children had found tin cans in the hospital's rubbish heap. Since the death of my sister, no had cared for my mother and the children. As a result, Alfred starved. People would often ask, "Is Anna's little Alfred still alive?"[578]

In total the number of local Germans to be discharged from the labor army reached 40,773 by November 1951.[579] Most of these survivors remained confined to the Urals still attached to their

576 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 269.
577 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, ll. 269–270.
578 Toews, *Journeys,* p. 43.
579 Berdinskikh, doc. 8, pp. 339–340.

previous industrial enterprises, but now classified as special settlers rather than members of the labor army. However, a number returned or had already been working in Kazakhstan and Central Asia at the time of their reclassification. Thus by 1 January 1953, this contingent of German special settlers in the region totaled nearly 9,000 people. This number included 5,936 in Kazakhstan, 1,681 in Tajikistan, 1,024 in Uzbekistan, 230 in Kyrgyzstan, and 146 in Turkmenistan.[580] These men and women like other special settlers had special stamps in their identity documents restricting their residency and movement. Jakob Mergela returned to Kyrgyzstan from Bakalstroi in 1946 after being discharged from the labor army. Upon his release from the labor army and reclassification as a special settler his passport received a stamp reading, "Allowed only to live in PGT Kant Kyrgyz SSR." This restriction made it very difficult for him to complete his education or get decent work.[581] Difficulties obtaining higher education and white collar jobs continued to afflict the Germans throughout the Soviet period. These problems took a particularly acute form in Kyrgyzstan.

A much larger number of Germans deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia and subsequently mobilized into the labor army and then sent either back to Kazakhstan or to southern Central Asia also increased the number of German special settlers in the region. The number of deported Germans living under special settlement restrictions in this latter region grew from none in 1942 to 11,000 by 1 January 1953. This number included 8,323 in Tajikistan, 1,451 in Uzbekistan, 1,035 in Turkmenistan and 528 in Kyrgyzstan.[582] These returning survivors joined the already existing local Germans that had been placed under special settlement restrictions in 1945 and 1946 after the end of World War II.

The total number of premature deaths suffered by mobilized Germans in the labor army is impossible to tabulate. V.M. Kirillov has tabulated the existing recorded deaths in the labor army be-

580 Zemskov 2005, pp. 213–218.
581 Alieva, vol. I, pp. 203–204.
582 Zemskov 2005, pp. 213–218.

fore their release to come up with an incomplete number of 36,896 Germans or 11.7% of the total mobilized.[583] Even more difficult is to tabulate the number of deaths caused by service in the labor army including those that died of causes related to their stay in the institution after their demobilization. Kirillov notes that a majority of German labor army conscripts released as invalids died before the abolition of the special settlement regime at the end of 1955. The total number of released German invalids constituted 11.4% of those sent to Tagillag, 30% sent to Bogoslovlag, and 30.5% sent to Bakallag.[584] Hence the number of tabulated deaths in camps from archival sources and memory books are considerably lower than the estimates given by historians. The consensus number of premature deaths of Germans mobilized into the labor army in both the camps and civilian commissariats as well as deaths within a year of discharge due to ailments acquired in the institution is around 60,000[585] to 70,000.[586] This range is over a fifth (20%) of the total number of Germans in the USSR mobilized to work in the labor army.

583 V.M. Kirillov, "Deportatsiia, trudovaiia mobilizatsiia i spetsposelenie nemtsev SSR," *Ezhegodnik maiikrn*, no. 1, 2015, p. 302.

584 V.M. Kirillov, "Deportatsiia, trudovaiia mobilizatsiia i spetsposelenie nemtsev SSR," *Ezhegodnik maiikrn*, no. 1, 2015, p. 302.

585 A. German and O. Silantjewa (eds.), *'Vyselit' s treskom'. Ochevidsty i issledovaniia o tragedii rossisskikh nemtsev/'Fortjagen muss man sie'. Zeitungen und Forscher berichten uber die Tragodie der Russlanddeutschen* (Moscow: MSNK Press, 2011), p. 308.

586 Viktor Krieger, "Einsatz im Zwangsarbeitslager" in Alfred Eisfeld (ed.), *Von der Autonomiegrundung zur Verbannung und Entrechtung. Die Jahre 1918 und 1941 bis 1948 in der Geschichte der Deutschen in Russland* (Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, 2008), p. 146.

**Table 29: Deaths of Mobilized Germans According to Memory Books 1941–1947**[587]

| Name of Camp | Number Mob. Germans | Deaths of Mob. Germans | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Usol'lag | 8,836 | 3,508 | 39.7% |
| Tagillag | 6,500 | 630 | 9.69% |
| Bogoslovlag | 20,711 | 3,734 | 18% |
| Bakallag | 42,902 | 6,288 | 14.6% |
| Total | 78,949 | 14,460 | 18.31% |

The labor army is collectively and individually remembered by surviving Russian Germans as the most traumatic experience suffered by the nationality under Stalin. Almost the entire adult German population in the USSR capable of physical labor found themselves in camps and other forced labor projects during and after World War II. The condemnation of such a large portion of a nationality to labor camps is unique in Soviet history. The extremely high mortality rate of Germans in the labor army contingents serving in NKVD corrective labor camps is truly astounding.

587 Kirillov and Mateeva, pp. 653–654.

# 10 The Special Settlement Regime

The NKVD placed the deported Germans under special settlement restrictions similar to those of the kulaks deported in the early 1930s. In a very real sense they became racial kulaks.[588] A decree by 28 August 1941 by Beria with the title, "The Question of Special Resettlers, Providing Measures for Transporting and Supervising them in their Assigned Places of Resettlement" founded the OSP (Section on Special Settlement) and gave the internally deported Germans this legal status.[589] The movement restrictions on German special settlers imposed on 28 August 1941 proved hard to enforce and the NKVD leadership issued numerous demands that the local NKVD authorities in Kazakhstan and Siberia exert greater vigilance over the deportees. On the same day as the first mass mobilization of Germans into the labor army, 10 January 1942 the NKVD issued an order prohibiting the deported Germans from moving from raion to raion. They were restricted to the raion to where they had been resettled. This ban on moving from their assigned raion was to be enforced by the militia as well as the NKVD.[590] Two days later, on 12 January 1942, the NKVD in Paludensk raion, North Kazakhstan Oblast received instructions to strengthen their enforcement of the movement restrictions on the German special settlers. The instructions further called for the arrest and prosecution of the deportees violating these restrictions using the existing Soviet passport legislation. Finally, the instructions requested that the raion NKVD work more vigorously to eliminate "fascist agents" and prevent escapes among the German special settlers.[591] Subsequent decrees reinforced these restrictions on the special settlers.

588 I owe the term "racial kulaks" to Kevin Michael Grace who used it in a different context.

589 A. Shadt, "Pravovoi status rossiiskikh nemtsev v SSSR (1940–1950-e gg.) in A.A. German, *Nemtsy SSSR v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny i pervoe poslevoinnoe desiatletie 1941–1955 gg.*, Moscow: Gotika, 2001, p. 292.

590 Shadt, p. 293.

591 Milova, 1995, vol. ll, doc. 63, pp. 237–239.

Despite these restrictions, the Soviet authorities had difficulty enforcing them. Local officials frequently lacked the manpower and the desire to effectively impose these regulations at first. The situation in the special settlements was characterized by chaos during the fall of 1941. A lack of effective order continued to prevail among the special settlement areas throughout most of the war. To make matters worse for the Soviet government, the NKVD consistently reported the expression of wide spread anti-Soviet sentiment among the deported Germans in Kazakhstan.[592] There were also similar reports from Siberia.[593] Anti-Soviet statements frequently had to do with the poor material conditions the Germans suffered following the deportations. The weak control exercised by the NKVD over the deportees during 1941 was thus a concern for the Soviet government. It is only in 1945 that the regime was able to assert effective regulation over the lives of the Germans and other deported nationalities classified as special settlers.[594] The chaos and desperation of the war years instead motivated the Soviet government to deal with the German deportees in a different manner.

During 1942 the Stalin regime issued very few new instructions regarding the treatment of German deportees. Instead the NKVD reduced the social tensions created by the massive influx of impoverished, poorly supervised, and according to their informants politically hostile Germans into Kazakhstan and Siberia through their massive conscription into the labor army.[595] This alleviated the need for massive preventive arrests among the German special settlers. Conscripts in the labor army lived under a set of codified restrictions much more severe than those imposed upon the special settlers. Their removal from rural areas with nearby Kazakh and Russian populations to isolated and guarded labor camps and work sites eased friction between the deportees

592 Karpykova, doc. 50, pp. 102–104, doc. 52, pp. 107–108, and doc. 54, pp. 110–112.
593 German, "Mobilizovannye sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh", p. 169.
594 Mukhina, pp. 66–69.
595 German, "Mobilizovannye sovetskie nemtsy v lageriakh NKVD," p. 169.

and locals and placed the Germans under stricter NKVD control. All the physically able members of this potentially hostile population were effectively quarantined thus ending the possibility of violent opposition. It is also possible a similar logic might have contributed a small push factor in the NKVD decision to deport tens of thousands of Germans to Siberia a second time to work in fishing camps in the Arctic river basins. Although in this case the pull factor of an acute need for labor to work in the undermanned fishing industry proved to be the overwhelming single most important factor in this relocation.[596] Most of the German population remaining as special settlers in Kazakhstan and Siberia after the mass inductions into the labor army during 1942 consisted of children, the elderly, the sick and invalided, and other people incapable of doing heavy physical labor. The Soviet state saw little reason to regulate their use as a labor force during 1942–1943.

Significant new Soviet legislation tightening the restrictions on special settlers occurred only after the Stalin regime decided to deport the Karachais and Kalmyks in 1943. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet ordered the deportation of all Karachais from the Karachai Autonomous Oblast. The decree's first operative clause read, "1. All Karachais, living in the territory of the oblast, are to be resettled to other regions of the USSR, and the Karachai Autonomous Oblast liquidated."[597] On 2 November 1943, the NKVD deported 68,938 Karachais from their homeland in the Caucasus to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[598] By 23 November 1943, 68,614 deported Karachais had arrived in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[599] A 15 January 1944 NKVD report by Chernyshov noted that 45,501 of these deportees had arrived in Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan they

596 The decrees on mobilizing labor for the fishing industry in northern Siberia are responses to calls for labor and do not refer solely to Russian-Germans. The others consisted of Russian "kulaks", Finns, Lithuanians and others (Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 103, p. 361). In 1944 the Soviet government sent deported Kalmyks to work in these fishing camps (Bugai 1995, p. 81 and Ivanov, p. 94).

597 Pobol and Polian, doc. 3.77, pp. 393–394.

598 Pobol and Polian, p. 389.

599 Pobol and Polian, doc. No. 3.83, pp. 403–404.

were divided between 20,285 people in Jambul Oblast under 11 special commandants and 25,216 people in South Kazakhstan under 13 special commandants.[600] The Karachais thus greatly increased the number of special settlers in Kazakhstan that needed to be kept under administrative surveillance and discipline by the NKVD special commandants.

On 27–28 December the NKVD deported the Kalmyks from the Kalmyk ASSR to Altai Krai, Krasnoiarsk Krai, Omsk Oblast, and Novosibirsk Oblast. On 27 December 1943, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet ordered, "All Kalmyks, living in the territory of the Kalmyk ASSR, are to be resettled to other regions of the USSR, and the Kalmyk ASSR liquidated."[601] The influx of 93,139 Kalmyks into Siberia like that of the Karachais into Kazakhstan put pressure on the NKVD to reform and strengthen the special settlement system.[602] The special commandants needed to be both expanded and given more streamlined orders to deal with the new waves of deportees to Siberia.

During 1943, the NKVD expanded the net of NKVD officers controlling the German special settlers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[603] Later they would expand and tighten up the regulations in anticipation of the mass deportation of the Chechens and Ingush as special settlers to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan at the end of 1944. On 31 January 1944, the GKO planned to resettle up to 400,000 Chechens and Ingush in Kazakhstan and another 90,000 in Kyrgyzstan.[604] By 17 February 1944, the NKVD had prepared to deport 459,486 Chechens and Ingush to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to be placed under special settlement restrictions.[605] The deportations began on 23 February 1944 with the arrest of 842 people and the rounding up of 94,741 people and the loading of 20,023 of them onto train echelons.[606] By 29 February 1944, the NKVD had

600 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 170, ll. 1–6.
601 Pobol and Polian, doc. No. 3.89, p. 412.
602 Pobol and Polian, doc. No. 3.94, pp. 421–422.
603 Berdinskikh, p. 445.
604 Pobol and Polian, doc. No. 3.111, pp. 443–445.
605 GARF F. R-9401, O. 2, D. 64, l. 167.
606 GARF F. R-9401, O. 2, D. 64, l. 165.

deported 387,229 Chechens and 91,250 Ingush for a total of 478,479 people in 159 echelons.[607] This massive second wave of deportees to Kazakhstan just about doubled the number of special settlers in the republic.

The NKVD issued prikaz 00127 "On Introducing Effective Regulations for Raion and Village Special Commandants of the NKVD" on 7 February 1944. Following upon NKVD prikaz No. 0049 of 12 January 1944, this represented one of the first steps in the creation of the special *kommandatura* system to control national deportees. It laid out the structure, staff, tasks, and responsibilities of the special commandant offices. This decree required special NKVD commandants to undertake a number of tasks regarding the deportees. First and foremost was to prevent escapes among special settlers and return fugitives to their settlements. Next was to uncover anti-Soviet and criminal elements among the special settlers as well as those with negative political attitudes. Third was to enforce the existing administrative regime in places of special settlement and assist with the use of the special settlers as a labor force. Finally, the special commandants had to maintain a count of the number of special settlers for the purpose of controlling their movement.[608] To these ends the NKVD special commandants received a long list of instructions.

This decree severely restricted the physical movement of Germans and other special settlers. It prohibited them from leaving their assigned settlements even for short periods of time without explicit written permission from their designated commandants.[609] Travel passes for special settlers had specified days and itineraries and required NKVD stamps and signatures from both the point of departure and the point of arrival.[610] The German special settlers could not legally travel beyond a very con-

607 Pobol and Polian, doc. 3.121, p. 455.
608 Tsarevskaia-Diankina, doc. 115, pp. 401.
609 Tsareveskaia-Diakina, doc. 115, p. 403.
610 Photograph of document in Alfred Eisfeld, *Die Aussiedlung der Deutschen aus der Wolgarepublik (1941–1957)*, Munich, Osteuropa-Institut, 2003, doc. 12a, p. 87.

fined area without getting special permission from the police officials responsible for maintaining them in their subordinate position. The NKVD could arbitrarily deny this permission without any explanation.

On 16 July 1944, the NKVD again reorganized the special commandant structure responsible for supervising the special settlers. Deputy NKVD Chief Kruglov issued Prikaz No. 00823 "On Liquidating the District Special Commandants of the NKVD and Introducing Additional Staff in the District Sections of the NKVD for Servicing the Special Settlers." This decree eliminated the existing NKVD (raion) district special commandants and gave their responsibilities regarding the special settlers over to the district sections and special commandants of the NKVD. The decree also increased the number of NKVD personnel assigned to look after the special settlers.[611] This reorganization, however, did not remedy the problems faced by the NKVD in attempting to control the movement of the special settlers and prevent escapes. The next month the NKVD again reorganized the special settlement administration, this time in a much more radical manner.

On 16 August 1944, the NKVD issued Prikaz No. 0170 with new regulations on counting and registering special settlers. This decree bore the title, "Announcing Instructions for Registering Special Settlers." The new NKVD instructions on registering the special settlers sought to increase the degree of control this organ exercised over the settlers. In particular it sought to tighten control over their ability to move from their assigned settlements without authorization. It also sought to collect information on the special settlers that could be used in facilitating their use as a labor force. The special settlers received new identification documents and personnel files marking their restricted legal status. According to this decree each district (raion) section of the NKVD as well as the special settlement section of the NKVD-UNKVD of the krai or oblast received copies of the registration cards of all special settlers under their jurisdiction. In Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and

611 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 127, p. 427.

Kyrgyzstan a third copy of the registration card remained with the republican NKVD. These registration cards had three forms. The first was a family card registering the head of each family. The second form was a personal card issued to every special settler over the age of 16 who was not the head of a family. Finally, the third form consisted of a summary of children under 16 registered as special settlers. The registration card measured 95mm by 140 mm. The information registered on these cards included marriage status, the legal act deporting them as special settlers, the train echelon they arrived on, and all court decisions regarding these individuals.[612] These cards formed the data base from which the Soviet government created a huge array of statistical reports. This information allowed the NKVD to control the residency, movement, and labor of the special settlers.

The NKVD organized the registration cards into three sections: "registered present", "temporarily absent", and "archival reference." The first category is self explanatory. It includes all those special settlers found in the districts assigned to them by the NKVD. The second category included all fugitives that had fled the bounds of their assigned district and those that had been arrested and sent away to serve camp or prison sentences. The final category consisted of those special settlers that had been freed from special settlement restrictions, resettled permanently in another district, or had died. The instructions further noted the importance of keeping the information on these cards current and keeping them under lock and key.[613] As a result of this system the NKVD had two sets and in the case of Kazakhstan and Central Asia three sets of cards indicating the status of all present and past special settlers at any given time. This greatly facilitated monitoring the millions of special settlers under their supervision.

On 17 August 1944 as a result of this reorganization of the special settlement regime, the Special Settlement Section of the NKVD was founded. Its function was to assist with the labor and

612 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 129, pp. 433–435.
613 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 129, pp. 435–436.

economic accommodations of special settlers, perform chekist services among them, count them, and maintain them under administrative surveillance. On 5 September 1944, the NKVD kept 2,225,000 special settlers under its control of which 589,000 were Germans. The German special settlers remained scattered across Kazakhstan, Krasnoiarsk Krai, Altai Krai, Novosibirsk Oblast, Kemerovo Oblast, and Omsk Oblast. Most worked in agriculture, but 97,000 German special settlers worked in various industries.[614] The actual number of Germans working in industry in the USSR was much greater. But, the men and women mobilized into the labor army at this time had earlier been removed from the special settler rolls and were not added back on to them until later. Hence the German special settler count suffered a huge decline from 1942 to 1944. A portion of this loss also consisted of deaths due to malnutrition, exposure, and disease during these years.

Special commandants registered children born to German special settlers on the family registration rolls connected with each family head. Upon turning 16 years old the commandants registered these adolescents individually in the personal records of special settlers maintained by the NKVD.[615] In contrast after 1945, the Stalin regime freed the children of exiled kulaks who did not belong to unreliable nationalities such as the Germans, Kalmyks, Karachais, Chechens and Crimean Tatars upon reaching the age of 16.[616] German children found themselves condemned from birth to death as special settlers with restricted rights.

The NKVD began recruiting a clandestine network of spies to watch over the special settlers already in 1941. The security organs viewed this population as hostile to Soviet power. Most of the informants came from among the German deportees themselves. Originally from 1941 to 1944 these agents worked under the Section for Combating Banditry of the NKVD. Later after February 1944, they came under the jurisdiction of the "Operative-Chekist Services" of the NKVD-MVD sections on Special Settlement in the

614 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 130, pp. 439–444.
615 Berdinskikh, doc. 7, pp. 50–51.
616 Zemskov 2005, p. 139.

various krais, oblasts and republics of the USSR.[617] The job of these agents was to report anti-Soviet statements and plans to escape by special settlers to the special commandants. This network included informants drawn from among the special settler population, a more closely trusted group of agents also consisting mostly of special settlers, and finally residents consisting of NKVD and later MVD operatives working undercover among the special settlers. These eyes and ears of the special commandant greatly outnumbered the number of officials engaged in overt surveillance of the special settlers.

**Table 30: Number of Special Commandant Offices in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, 1944–1950[618]**

| Year | Kazakhstan and Central Asia | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan | Tajikistan | Turkmenistan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July 1944 | 679 | 488 | 96 | 95 | NA | NA |
| Nov 1950 | 1226 | 878 | 106 | 186 | 50 | 6 |

The special commandant networks kept the special settlers under strict surveillance. This required a significant investment in manpower. By 1 January 1953 these networks had grown quite large. They included 2893 commandants, 1861 assistant commandants, 2801 guards, 1217 people in operative search subdivisions, 33,462 agents, and 94,246 ten householders.[619] The NKVD and later MVD apparatus kept the special settlers under constant surveillance. This apparatus served to alert the commandants of any actions or statements punishable by administrative fines or arrest or trial by special boards of the NKVD or MVD. The security organs exercised control over the lives of special settlers to a much greater extent than they did free citizens. Special settlers occupied a legal and social position in Soviet society just above that of prisoners,

617 Berdiniskh, p. 475.

618 A.I. Kokurin, "Spetspereselentsy v SSSR v 1944, ili god v bol'shovo pereselenii," *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, 1993, no. 5, doc. 3, pp. 103–107 and Zemskov 2005, p. 187.

619 Zemskov 2005, p. 187.

but far below that of the majority of the population. Their legal disabilities and stigma made their position similar to that of second class citizens in other states.

The special commandants that ruled over the special settlers received their final form as a result of Soviet legislation at the start of 1945. This began the period of the full set of restrictions upon special settlers. These restrictions consisted of strict control of the movement and residency of the special settlers. They needed special passes to move beyond a 3 km radius. Their population was divided up into groups of ten households each with a designated person to report regularly to the NKVD special commandant. Every ten days this person had to report to the commandant. Special settlers suspected of engaging in "counter revolutionary" or criminal acts found themselves subjected to trials by special tribunals. The Soviet government decided to unify and streamline the large collection of decrees and regulations regarding the huge number of special settlers into two short documents.[620] The SNK issued both of these documents on 8 January 1945. Together they provided a succinct summary of the legal status of the special settlers and the powers and duties of the special commandants.

The SNK passed resolution No. 35, "On the Legal Status of Special Settlers" on 8 January 1945. This document replaced the ad hoc collection of decrees by the NKVD and other organs governing the administration of the special settlers with a codified and uniform set of restrictions. This document laid out the legal disabilities suffered by special settlers. They enjoyed far fewer rights than ordinary Soviet citizens and formed a separate and unequal class of citizens subject to different laws. Foremost among the legal restrictions the Soviet government imposed upon the special settlers was their lack of rights regarding freedom of movement and choice of residency. Article three of the resolution severely limited the freedom of movement of the special settlers. They needed special permission from their assigned NKVD commandant to leave their designated areas of settlement. Leaving their

620 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, pp. 70–71.

assigned area of settlement without NKVD permission constituted illegal flight and was punishable as a crime. Special settlers also had to report any such flight by family members to the NKVD special commandants. Article four mandated strict reporting of all changes in family composition to the NKVD. Heads of families or their designated substitutes had to report all births, deaths, and escapes to their NKVD commandant within three days. All children of special settlers had to be registered as special settlers upon birth. Finally, article five obligated special settlers to abide by the regulations and established order of the special settlement regime and all commands from NKVD special commandants. These commandants had the power to punish all violations of article five with a fine up to 100 ruble or arrest and incarceration in jail for up to five days.[621] This resolution reinforced clear legal distinctions between nationalities living under the special settlement regime and the majority of the Soviet population.

Council of Peoples Commissariats Union of SSRs
Resolution No. 35
From 8 January 1945 Moscow, Kremlin

On the legal situation of special settlers

Council of Peoples Commissariats Union of SSRs RESOLVES:
1. Special settlers enjoy all rights of citizens of the USSR, with the exception of restrictions, provided for in the present Resolution.
2. All able bodied special settlers are obliged to be engaged in socially useful labor.
Towards this goal local Soviets of workers deputies in coordination with organs of the NKVD are to organize labor arrangements of the special settlers in agriculture, industrial enterprises, construction, and economic cooperative organizations and institutions.
The violation of labor discipline by special settlers is subject to punishment according to existing laws.
3. Special settlers do not have the right without the authorization of the NKVD special commandant to be absent from the boundaries of the region of settlement served by their special commandant.
Voluntary absence from the boundaries from the region of settlement, served by the special commandant, will be viewed as flight and treated as a criminal matter.

621 Zemskov 2005, pp. 120–121.

> 4. Special settlers—heads of families or people substituting for them are required within a three day period to report to the special commandant of the NKVD all events that change the composition of the family (birth of a child, death of a family member, flight, etc.).
> 5. Special settlers are obliged to strictly observe the established regime and social order of the places of settlement and obey all orders of the special commandant of the NKVD.
> The violation of the regime and social order in the places of settlement by special settlers is subject to administrative sanction in the form of a fine up to 100 rubles or arrest up to five days.
>
> Deputy Chairman
> Council of Peoples Commissariats Union of SSRs V. Molotov
>
> Administrative Affairs
> Council of Peoples Commissariats Union of SSRs Ia. Chadaev.[622]

The second decree issued that day by the SNK is a mirror image and focuses on the powers of the special commandants rather than the restrictions on the special settlers. Resolution No. 34-14s "On the Status of Special Commandants of the NKVD" delineated the powers and obligations of the special commandants. The special commandants were to keep the special settlers under surveillance with the goal of preventing escapes, disorder, and political opposition among the special settlers. They were also to administer the labor and economic arrangements of the special settlers. The document repeated the same responsibilities and legal authority of the special commandants as laid down in SNK Resolution No. 35 in a slightly longer format. The commandants were to count the special settlers, keep watch over them, launch searches for escapees, accept complaints and declarations from the deportees, and issue permission for them to temporarily leave the confines of their assigned settlement. The document reiterated the power of the special commandants to issue 100 ruble fines or five day arrests. For more serious offenses including escapes, banditry, and "counter-revolutionary" acts they were to report the special settlers to higher authorities in the NKVD.[623] The NKVD special

622 Zemskov 2005, pp. 120–121.
623 N.F. Bugai and A.N. Kotsonis, "*Obiazat' NKVD SSSR … Vyselit' grekov*," (Moscow: INSAN, 1999), pp. 93–95.

commandants had incredible power over the day to day lives of the special settlers who were legally second class citizens lacking in freedom of movement and confined to very limited assigned territories.

Special settlers had to report once a month for interviews with their assigned special commandant. Every monthly check required the special settler to fill out a registration card to prove that he had not left his place of obligatory settlement. This was generally followed by an intense questioning session. These interrogations served as a way for the NKVD and later MVD to both count and control the deportees through intimidation. It also allowed the authorities a means of unmasking alleged criminal and opposition activity among the special settlers.[624] Few deportees looked forward to their monthly meetings with the commandant.

The Stalin regime exercised control over the Germans and other special settlers through a network of special NKVD commandants that used a variety of overt and covert means to keep them under surveillance. The overt side included the special commandants themselves, their assistants, and ten householders. This last category consisted of special settlers selected to be responsible for reporting on ten households each to their assigned special commandant. On the covert side it included the network of informants and agents run by the NKVD among the special settlers as well as the anti-escape networks organized among the surrounding Kazakhs and other local peoples. These spies reported regularly to the special commandants on the activities and statements of the special settlers.[625] The existence of a large network of informants and spies reporting to the special commandants represented one of the key mechanisms by which the NKVD exercised control over the special settlers.[626] They allowed the

624 Nelly Daes, trans. Nancy Holland, *Gone Without a Trace: German Russian Women in Exile.* Lincoln, NE: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 2001, p. 66 and p. 137.

625 Mukhina, pp. 85–86.

626 L. Belkovets, "Spetsposelenie nemtsev v Zapadnoi Sibiri (1941–1955 gg)," in I.L. Shcherbakova, ed., *Nakazannyi narod: Repressii protiv rossiiskikh nemtsev.* Moscow: "Zve'ia", 1999, p. 164.

Soviet authorities a greater opportunity to keep the special settlers under surveillance than relying solely on the commandants would have allowed.

The use of mobilized German labor in the USSR continued after the end of World War II. Local Germans that had long lived in Central Asia continued to provide crucial involuntary labor on major local infrastructure projects. Among them were the Voroshilov and Alamedin hydropower plants in Kyrgyzstan. A report from early 1946 notes that these projects continued to face continued escapes of mobilized Germans from their assigned work due to poor material conditions. In particular the lack of proper clothes and shoes for Kyrgyzstan's harsh winter climate.

NKVD USSR, Moscow
Chief of Section on Special Settlement
Colonel Comrade Kuzetsov

11 January 1946

In the matter of providing information on the number and movement of mobilized German men and women, working on the construction of hydroelectric stations and industries in Frunze Oblast of the Kyrgyz SSR as of 1 January 1946.

We report, that in the fourth quarter of 1945 on the construction site of the Voroshilov hydroelectric station left 20 people, of this number demobilized due to age were two people and deserted 18 people, arrived 17 people (transferred from the construction site of the Alamedin hydroelectric station).

During this time on the construction site of the Alamedin hydroelectric station left 61 people, from them: demobilized due to age—23 people, deserted 41 people, arrived—4 people (returned deserters).

All the deserters from the construction sites of Voroshilov and Alamedin hydroelectric stations until their mobilization lived in sovkhozes and kolkhozes in Frunze Oblast, in connection with unsatisfactory material—living conditions on the construction sites—lack of necessary shoes and clothes for work in winter time, finally, naturally, they left the construction sites for places, where their relatives lived. In connection with this significant flight the chief of the UNKVD of Frunze Oblast Lieutenant Colonel comrade Martynenko pointed out that there was a lack of security regime at the place of work of mobilized German men and women and proposed the return of all fugitives to the construction sites.

> On creating the necessary living conditions at the construction sites of the hydroelectric stations for mobiized Germans we refer the question to the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) and the Council of Peoples Commissars of the Kyrgyz SSR.
>
> Chief of the Section on Special Settlements of the NKVD of the Kyrgyz SSR
>
> Neverenko
> Chief of the 4th Section of the Section on Special Settlements
> Major Kuz'min[627]

Due to continued escapes the Soviet government imposed new draconian conditions upon the Germans and other groups deported on the basis of their ethnicity in November 1948. By 1 October 1948 the NKVD had registered a total of 77,541 out of 2,104,751 special settlers as having escaped from their assigned places of residency. Out of these escapees they had hunted down and found 20,955 people. Germans with 1,004,398 special settler accounted for 22,235 escapes of which 6,896 had been recovered by the NKVD.[628] On 26 November 1948 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued an Ukaz making the internal exile of these nationalities permanent and made attempted escapes from this confinement punishable by 20 years of hard labor. This decree made the punishment of confined internal exile for the ethnic Germans and other deported nationalities not only a life sentence, but a life sentence for all subsequent generations based solely upon their ancestry. This complete racialization of the deported peoples ended any credibility to the Soviet claim to be committed to racial equality.

> UKAZ
> PRESIDIUM of the SUPREME SOVIET of the USSR
> On the Criminal Accountability for Flight from Places of Obligatory and Decreed Settlement of People Exiled to Distant Regions of the Soviet Union in the Period of the Fatherland War.

627 Bugai, 1998, doc. No. 238, pp. 307–308.

628 N.F. Bugai, *Kurdiskii mir Rossii: Politiko-pravovaia praktika, intergratsiia, ethnokulturnoe vozrozhdenie (2017–2010-e gody).* Saint Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2012, p. 177.

> With the goal of strengthening the regime of settlement for those exiled by Supreme organs of the USSR in the period of the Fatherland War Chechens, Karachais, Ingush, Balkars, Kalmyks, Germans, Crimean Tatars and others, that at the time of their resettlement there was not a specified length of their exile, establishes that those resettled to distant regions of the Soviet Union by decrees of people in the high leadership are exiled forever, without the right to return to their previous places of residence.
>
> For the voluntary leaving (flight) from places of obligatory settlement those exiles that are guilty will be subject to being prosecuted for criminal acts. It is determined that the punishment for this crime is 20 years of hard labor.
>
> Cases related to the flight of exiles will be reviewed by Special Boards of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR.
>
> People, guilty of harboring exiles, fleeing from places of obligatory settlement, or assisting their flight, giving permission for exiles to return to their places of previous residence, and rendering them help in accommodations in their places of previous residence, are subject to criminal penalties. It is determined that the sentence for this crime is deprivation of freedom for a period of five years
>
> Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR
> N. SHVERNIK
> Secretary of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR
> A. Gorkin
> Moscow, Kremlin
> 26 November 1948[629]

The 26 November 1948 decree only applied to Germans deported from European areas of the USSR eastward in 1941. It did not apply to Germans repatriated from Germany and other areas of Europe west of the USSR. It also did not apply to Germans already living east of the Urals in 1941.[630] These special settlers continued to be subject instead to the penalties specified in point 2 article 82 of the Criminal Codex of the RSFSR and the corresponding legislation in other union republics.[631] This article carried an eight year prison sentence for flight from areas of obligatory settlement.

629 Zemskov 2005, p. 160.
630 Zemskov 2005, p. 168.
631 Zemskov 2005, p. 161.

Nevertheless the vast majority of Russian Germans had been deported by state decrees to Kazakhstan and Siberia from European areas of the USSR and thus fell under the strictures of the 26 November 1948 decree and became subject to 20 years of hard labor for any escape attempts.

The MVD again reorganized the special settlement system in 1949. On 19 February 1949 they issued a decree "About Organizing Personal Registration of Exiles, Special Settlers in the New System." The reorganization of the system included a thorough recounting of all special settlers deported on the basis of their nationality and accounting for all their movements.[632] The special settlers received new ID cards with their fingerprints, photographs, and detailed descriptions of their external appearance.[633] The recount of special settlers collected a great deal of information on their occupational distribution, former service in the Red Army, educational levels, and other social-demographic data. More importantly, however, it allowed the MVD to better control the movement of the German special settlers. On 15 July 1949 the total number of special settlers counted by the MVD was 2,552,037 people of which 1,093,490 were Germans.[634] The 1949 recount of special settlers found only a small number of people of other nationalities living among the Germans, presumably mostly spouses in the few mixed marriages. These non-Germans numbered 9,126 Russians and 2,721 Ukrainians.[635] The vast majority of those counted as German special settlers were in fact ethnic Germans.

On an individual level the reorganization of the special settlement system meant the creation of extensive new personal files with the MVD authorities. These files contained eight mandatory documents. These documents included a report on the reason for the special settler's deportation and condemnation to their current

632 L. Belkovets, "Spetsposelenie nemtsev v Zapadnoi Sibiri (1941–1955 gg)," in I.L. Shcherbakova, ed., *Nakazannyi narod: Repressii protiv rossiiskikh nemtsev.* Moscow: "Zve'ia", 1999, p. 161.

633 V. Bruhl, "Deportirovannye narody v Sibiri (1935–1965 gg.). Sravnitel'nyi analiz," in Shcherbakova, *Nakaznnyi narod,* p. 104.

634 Zemskov 2005, table 27, p. 167.

635 GARF F. R-9479, O. 1, D. 642, l. 181.

legal status. Next, a questionnaire filled out by the deportee and photo card. Then signed receipts acknowledging SNK resolution no. 35 of January 1945 "On the Legal Situation of Special Settlers" and the Ukaz of Supreme Soviet of 26 November 1948, "On the Criminal Accountability for Flight from Places of Obligatory and Decreed Settlement of People Exiled to Distant Regions of the Soviet Union in the Period of the Fatherland War." The file also contained records of all administrative sanctions such as arrests and fines levied against the special settler. Other documents kept in these personal files include all declarations of births, deaths, marriages, and changes in residency by the special settler's family and material about criminal proceedings against the special settler including copies of the verdicts and sentences.[636] By 1949, the special settlement regime had basically been perfected. There were no major changes in the system of restrictions and regulations governing the lives of the German special settlers from this time until after Stalin's death in 1953.

As of 1 July 1951 the total number of German special settlers counted by the MVD numbered 1,155,815 people. The vast majority of these people, 803,853 as a result of resolutions passed by the leadership. That is they had been assigned special settler status by the GKO or SNK. Another 351,962 German special settlers had received the status as a result of decrees from the NKVD-MVD or decisions by Military Soviets at the front.[637] The legal basis for decreeing Germans special settlers on the basis of the NKVD or MVD orders alone was especially questionable.

The bulk of the German population remained under special settlement restrictions until several years after Stalin's death on 5 March 1953. At the time of his death in 1953 the Germans comprised nearly half of all special settlers in the USSR with over 1.2 million people.[638] During 1954 and 1955 the Soviet government removed most of these unfortunates from the special settlement rolls, but it was only on 13 December 1955 that the Soviet gov-

636 Berdinskh, p. 368.
637 Document reproduced in Berdinskh, p. 307.
638 Zemskov 2005, table 43, p. 210.

ernment removed the last Germans from the rolls of the special settlement register.[639] The elimination of the special settlement regime removed the most onerous civil rights limitations from the Germans. No longer did they have to regularly register with the MVD. They could more freely choose their place of residence and work. They could also now serve in the Soviet military. They could not, however, return to their previous areas of settlement or generally move to European areas of the USSR. They also continued to face discrimination regarding education and jobs. The Soviet government only ameliorated the persecution of the Germans in 1955. It did not end it.

639 Zemskov 2005, pp. 232–251.

# 11 Repatriated Germans

Due to the speed of the *Wehrmacht's* advance across the Soviet Union, a very large number of Germans living in Ukraine managed to avoid deportation eastward in 1941. Around 350,000 Germans in the western USSR came under the control of Nazi Germany during this time.[640] In 1943 and 1944, the German government evacuated over 300,000 of them westward to the Warthegau[641] and other regions still under its control. The Soviet Red Army overran the Warthegau in January 1945 during its march towards Berlin. The NKVD then forcibly returned those Germans that had escaped deportation in 1941 back to the Soviet Union. There the Stalin regime confined them to remote areas of the USSR under the same special settlement restrictions it imposed on the original deportees.

The German occupation authorities had given special privileges to the ethnic Germans living in Ukraine compared to other nationalities during their brief occupation of the region.[642] When the Soviet military began to advance after Stalingrad and recover lost territory, the German authorities sought to protect the remaining Germans under their control by evacuating them westward. Some 350,000 Germans from the USSR made their way to relocation camps in the Warthegau.[643] This strategy had already been used successfully in 1940 to protect the Baltic and Bessarabian Germans from persecution when the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldavia. The German government settled some 327,000 Germans from regions annexed to the USSR in 1940, mostly in the Warthegau.[644] Unlike the Russian Germans proper the US and UK did not recognize these earlier settlers in the Warthegau as Soviet citizens. Hence the vast majority of them

640 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 101.
641 A western region of Poland annexed to Germany.
642 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 100.
643 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 101.
644 Gellately, p. 373.

who made it to the US and British occupation zones avoided forced repatriation. In contrast the Germans from Soviet Ukraine found themselves subjected to forcible return to the USSR. Only around 102,000 managed to avoid repatriation.[645] Most of the remaining survivors found themselves turned over to the Soviet authorities after the end of the war.

The forced repatriation of Soviet citizens fearing persecution such as the Russian Germans represented a remarkable triumph of logistics for the Soviet authorities. The NKVD managed to extend its reach deep into Central Europe to recover hundreds of thousands of people attempting to flee Soviet rule due to very real fears of repression based upon their nationality or conduct during the war. Among those nationalities that fled west and avoided deportation to special settlements were 7,219 Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians. A smaller number of people consisting of 2,759 Chechens, Ingush, Karachais, and Balkars fled the North Caucasus. Finally, some 800 Bulgarians from Soviet Ukraine managed to temporarily find refuge in Romania and Bulgaria.[646] Former Soviet POWs that had served in Andrei Vlaslov's Russian Liberation Army also formed a large contingent of forced repatriates sent to special settlements. After the Russian Germans, Vlaslov's men represented the second largest contingent of involuntary returnees subjected to special settlement restrictions. In total the number of Vlaslovites repatriated and punished reached 148,079 men.[647] The repatriations represented a successful exercise in projecting Soviet power beyond its formal borders to capture those that had earlier escaped Soviet repression and those that had actively opposed Soviet power from abroad.

The Soviet government followed the 1941 mass deportation of Germans to Kazakhstan with the forced repatriation from 1945 to 1946 of those that escaped to Germany to Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and to a lesser extent Uzbekistan. An agreement between the US, UK and USSR worked out at the Yalta Summit

645 Krieger *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 150.
646 Zemskov 2005, p. 122.
647 Zemskov 2005, pp. 131–132.

called for the repatriation of all Soviet citizens back to the Soviet Union. This included all Germans that had possessed Soviet citizenship before 1939. The Soviet Union passed all repatriates including these Germans through Verification and Filtration Points (PFPs) and Verification and Filtration camps (PFLs). The NKVD then sent the repatriated Germans back to the USSR.[648] The Germans that had escaped the USSR to Germany during World War II now found themselves forcibly sent back to the Soviet authorities.

The NKVD rapidly processed thousands of Germans through PFLs and PFPs. The first large groups of repatriated Germans arrived back in the USSR in January 1945. On 20 and 21 August 1945, Brest PFP became seriously congested with the arrival of large numbers of Russian Germans. Already on 20 August 1945 some 4,500 Germans had arrived at the point. Before the end of the following day this number had increased to nearly 12,000.[649] By 20 November 1945, the chief of the section of PFL camps of the NKVD, Major Tkachev had reported that he had repatriated 140,000 Germans with Soviet citizenship. [650] The total number of German repatriates reached 203,796.[651] A full 195,151 of these repatriates came from Germany.[652] The NKVD placed all of them under special settlement restrictions in the eastern regions of the USSR according to NKVD Directive No. 181 of 11 October 1945.[653] The Stalin regime then transported these new German special settlers to remote areas of the USSR including Kazakhstan and Central Asia to serve as an involuntary work force.

The Soviet government used the German repatriates in various heavy industries in remote areas of the USSR. These men and women initially worked in coal mining, oil extraction, tree felling, construction and industrial enterprises.[654] Eventually they also worked in agriculture, the manufacture of steel, chemicals, paper,

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648 Berdinskikh, p. 327 and Zemskov, pp. 127–138.
649 German, Ilarionova, and Pleve, *Khrestomatiia,* doc. 8.5.4, p. 301.
650 German, Ilarionova, and Pleve, *Khrestomatiia,* doc. 8.5.5, p. 301
651 Bugai 1992, doc. 45, pp. 75–76.
652 Berdinskikh, doc. 9, pp. 341–343.
653 Tsarevskaia-Diakina, doc. 142, pp. 473–474.
654 German, Ilarionova, and Pleve, *Khrestomatiia*, doc. 8.57, pp. 303–304.

and armaments.[655] American and British soldiers returned many of these men, women, and children to Soviet custody where the MVD subjected them to forced labor, poor living conditions, and the legal disabilities of the special settlement regime.

The forced repatriation of Soviet citizens including ethnic Germans back to the USSR regardless of their wishes by US military forces had its origins in the Yalta Summit already before the end of the war. The US archives dealing with the subject, however, are difficult to match up with the Soviet ones due to the fact that the US did not divide the Soviet citizens in its custody by *natsional'nost'*.[656] On 8 July 1945 the US military noted that all Soviet citizens found in its custody after 11 February 1945 were to be repatriated regardless of their desires.

> Chief Soviet Representative accredited to this headquarters has protested against alleged practice of military authorities in AEF zones of responsibility requesting Soviet citizens to indicate whether or not they desire to be repatriated to the USSR.
>
> In the case of civilians displaced by reason of the war who are held by military commanders to be Soviet citizens and identified as such by authorized Soviet repatriation Representatives, uncovered by AEF forces after 11 February 1945, military commanders will not permit option to be offered as to whether or not they desire to be repatriated. Such persons will be repatriated in accordance with para 230 of this headquarters' and Administrative Memorandum No. 39—revised.
>
> Authenication: D.S. Vaughan
> Major, AC
> 8 July 1945[657]

The majority of Germans that had escaped deportation and special settlement in 1941 thus found themselves forcibly returned back to the USSR for the NKVD to resettle as special settlers.

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655 Berdinskikh, doc. 9, pp. 341–343.

656 Some of the archives concerning the U.S. side of the repatriation can be found at College Park, MD, National Archives, SHAEF, General Staff, G-5, RG 331, Box 49, 2703/3 to 2707/5.

657 Letter from SHAEF to Commander and Chief 21 Army Group, CG 12 Army Group, CG Sixth Army Group, and CG Com Zone, July 8, 1945, General Staff, G-5, RG 331, Box 49, 2707/1, file no. 46 758.

The Stalin regime sent the majority of the repatriated Germans to work in various heavy industries in Siberia, the Far North, and the Far East. In fall of 1945, the NKVD settled 4,090 repatriated Germans in Krasnoiarsk Krai to work in ship repair, lumber preparation, cement factories, and other heavy industries.[658] By 1 January 1947, the MVD had placed another 12,393 German repatriates in the Komi ASSR.[659] Kharbarovsk Krai received another 18,420 German repatriates, Sakhalin 1,220, and Amur Oblast 1,628.[660] By 1 January 1953 some 70% of German repatriate special settlers lived in the RSFSR versus 20% for Kazakhstan and 10% for Central Asia.[661] Since most of the repatriated Germans came from Ukraine they found themselves completely unprepared for the climatic and other conditions where the Stalin regime forcibly exiled them.

Most of those Germans that escaped deportation to Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1941 due to the Wehrmacht ended up being repatriated to the USSR in 1945 and 1946. Between 1945 to 1948 the MVD added 210,600 Germans with Soviet citizenship to the count of special settlers that had been repatriated from Germany.[662] The Soviet government passed all of its citizens that had been out of its control during the war through verification and filtration camps and points. Germans and other peoples subjected to national deportations during the war were automatically sent east as special settlers. This included the newly reoccupied Baltic states to which a number of Germans from the USSR had been relocated by the German occupation authorities. A letter of 6 April 1945 from the head of the NKVD in Estonia to Deputy Chief of the NKVD, Chernyshov noted his progress on the round up these Germans and their resettlement as special settlers in eastern regions of the USSR. These Germans numbered 268 adults and 93 children. All of these Germans were to be sent to the Komi ASSR

658 Bugai 1992, doc. 52, pp. 78–79.
659 Bugai 1992, doc. 53, p. 79.
660 Bugai 1995, p. 48.
661 German et al., p. 476.
662 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 269.

to work at felling trees. This was despite the fact that 60% of the adults in the contingent were not capable of working and many of the women had small children with them.[663] Another letter from Deputy Chief of the NKVD Chernyshov to the head of the NKVD verification and filtration camps on 15 April 1945 stressed this point. It ordered that the 1583 Germans with Soviet citizenship at the Rava-Russki verification and filtration point be relocated to Irkutsk or Yakutsk without any filtration.[664] Almost half of these repatriated Germans, 703 were children under 15. Only 318 were adult men capable of physical labor.[665] The choice of such remote areas of settlement for contingents of repatriated Germans consisting mainly of women, children, and invalids indicated a desire to punish the ethnic group as a whole.

Kazakhstan and Central Asia received a large number of Germans forcibly repatriated to the Soviet Union from Germany and other areas outside of Moscow's control during World War II. On 30 December 1945, Deputy Chief of the NKVD Chernyshov informed the head of the NKVD in the Uzbek SSR, Bajanov that his territory would be receiving a number of repatriated Germans. They were to be classified as special settlers and put under strict surveillance.[666] Despite this warning, Uzbekistan received comparatively few repatriated Germans. Tajikistan received far more Germans forcibly repatriated from Germany and other areas outside the USSR. Kazakhstan in turn received far more repatriated Germans than southern Central Asia. By 1 January 1953, the number of repatriated Germans in Kazakhstan had reached 42,850, followed by 18,023 in Tajikistan, 1,185 in Uzbekistan, 381 in Turkmenistan and only 36 in Kyrgyzstan.[667] Thus nearly a third of all repatriated Germans ended up in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

The Soviet government chose the remote Central Asian republic of Tajikistan as one of the primary destinations for Ger-

663 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 154, l. 140.
664 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 154, l. 136.
665 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 154, l. 137.
666 Bugai 1995, p. 47.
667 Zemskov 2005, pp. 213–218.

mans repatriated from outside the USSR. Other remote areas of the USSR such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Siberia were becoming filled up with special settlers by this time. But, Tajikistan still had plenty of room to receive new special settlers. The Germans in Tajikistan worked on collective and state farms devoted to the cultivation of cotton. On 13 April 1945, the Soviet NKVD forcibly removed 854 Germans from Lithuania and sent them to Tajikistan. In August and September 1945 another wave of German repatriates arrived in Tajikistan.[668] Close to half of the Germans found by the Soviet authorities in the Baltic States near the end of World War II ended up in Tajikistan, many of them in Stalinbad Oblast.[669] Food and medical supplies for these Germans remained below subsistence level throughout 1945. During this year many of the repatriates died from malnutrition and disease. Kurgan-Tyube Oblast in particular served as a site of human misery for repatriated Germans. While waiting at the train station here for collective farm officials to fetch them in horse drawn wagons, the German exiles found themselves subject to the depredations of local thieves.[670] The German special settlers in Tajikistan had to work on cotton farms. The pollen, dust, and exposure to the sun caused numerous health problems for the relocated Germans. In particular they suffered from respiratory, eye, and skin infections. Common ailments resulting from the poor sanitary conditions in the cotton fields included cataracts, trachoma, skin ulcers, and sepsis.[671] The Germans repatriated to Tajikistan continued to suffer from these poor material conditions until almost the end of the 1940s.

The Soviet government subjected the repatriated Germans to extra scrutiny due to their having been under German rule. The Stalin regime viewed this population to be especially prone to anti-Soviet activities. For instance during the first five months of 1952, Soviet tribunals convicted 318 repatriated Germans of vari-

668 Bugai 1995, p. 47.
669 German and Kurochkin, p. 65.
670 Futterer, p. 146 in Daes.
671 Futterer, p. 147 in Daes.

ous political crimes out of a population of 208,388.[672] Repatriated Germans found themselves in the awkward situation of having been forcibly sent back to a regime that viewed them as traitors just by virtue of their nationality. A situation greatly reinforced by the fact that they lived under German rule during the war.

The Germans repatriated to the USSR from Germany and other parts of Central Europe generally experienced even harsher conditions than those deported in 1941 to Kazakhstan and Siberia. They were considered to have actively betrayed the USSR by coming under German rule. The Stalin regime deemed their deportation to the interior of the USSR to be punishment for this treason. Their living and working conditions in remote areas of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan reached truly deplorable levels. Unfortunately, one cannot blame this particular crime solely on the Stalin regime. The democratic governments of the US and UK also participated in this injustice.

672 Tsarevskaia-Diankina, doc. 208, p. 680.

# 12 Local Germans

After the end of the war the NKVD without any higher formal authorization placed most of the local Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia that had not been deported under special settlement restrictions. Between 18 September and 6 November 1946 that is after the end of the war and the defeat of Germany, the NKVD placed 105,817 local Germans in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Siberia, the Far East and Urals that had never been deported or mobilized into the labor army under special settlement restrictions. This group shows up in the archives as "local Germans". In addition 40,773 formerly mobilized Germans that had never been deported received the status of special settlers upon their release from the labor army. This second group shows up in the Soviet documents as "mobilized".[673] These local Germans had been placed under special settlement restrictions by decree of the NKVD without any decision by the GKO, SNK, or Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Out of a total of 1,096,698 German special settlers in October 1949 a total of 121,567 or 11.1% were never deported. Most of these people, 95,016 were local Germans that had never left their areas of residency in eastern regions of the USSR. The other 26,551 Germans classified as special settlers that had never been deported were those that had formerly been mobilized into the labor army from local Germans in Siberia in Kazakhstan and then released. A full 90% of local Germans in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Bashkiria, and Cheliabinsk came under the special settlement regime. In contrast only 50% of those in Khabarovsk, Kemerovo, and Sverdlovsk received this status. While very few of the Germans living in Omsk (2.8%), Chkalovsk (2.9%), and Altai (3.3%) before 1941 became special settlers.[674] The imposition of special settlement restrictions on these local Germans east of the Urals had a very shaky legal basis even under the arbitrary system of the USSR under Stalin. A report from the MGB of Kazakhstan to Abakumov on 12 August 1950 noted the legal problems with this action.

673 Berdinskikh, doc. no. 9, pp. 341–343.
674 GARF, F. 9479, O. 31, D. 372, l. 253.

> In Kazakhstan the record of special settlers includes 56,972 local Germans, not subject to resettlement in the Period of the Great Fatherland War. These Germans were taken into the registration of special settlers in 1945 by a telegraphed decree by the deputy minister of internal affairs of the USSR c. (omrade) Chernyshov. **There has been no kind of government decision about the extension of these restrictions establising them as evictees.**
> The General Procurator of the Union of SSRs has clarified to the Procurator of the Kazakh SSR that it is illegal to take these Germans into the registration of special settlers and they are subject to liberation. Guided by these instructions, the Procurator of the republic, and also oblast and raion procurators of the Kazakh SSR refuse to sanction the arrest and arraignment on criminal charges cases of flight by these Germans from places of settlement and do not sanction their arrest by administrative order for the violation of the regime in places of special settlement.[675]

Despite the opposition to the actions of the MVD by the procurator's office the state security organs still prevailed and successfully kept the local Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia registered as special settlers subject to the same legal restrictions as internal deportees.

Almost all the Germans in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan thus became special settlers in 1945 and 1946 after World War II despite having never been deported. The entire village of Luxemburg 15 km away from the capital of Frunze was converted into a special settlement under the strict control of the MVD. Movement even to neighboring Kant required special MVD permission. Elizaveta Stepanova Schietz, one of the village's inhabitants recalled the following.

> Further movement was forbidden on the street where Kant began. Somebody might see you and report you to the commandant,—five days arrest! Even going to the kolkhoz field needed permission from the district MVD. And to Frunze—it was 15 kilometers from us—you still needed to have permission from the republic. And Russians and Kyrgyz stood watch over us like wolves.[676]

The NKVD and MVD converted the various German villages in Kyrgyzstan into special settlements after World War II where the

675 T.V. Tsarevskaia-Diakina, (ed.), *Spetspereselentsy v SSSR: Vol. V Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: Konets 1920-kh-pervaia polvina 1950-kh godov,* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004), doc. 200, p. 657.

676 Alieva, vol. I, p. 200.

residents lived under house arrest needing special permission to even travel to the next town. Anna Abarazova (nee Fast) described her war time experience in Kyrgyzstan in the following manner, "We were on the books. All of our relatives were repressed. We were held in the village at gunpoint."[677] This registration of the Germans in Kyrgyzstan as special settlers and imposition of restrictions on their movement took place after the defeat of Germany and lasted until August 1954, more than a full year after Stalin's death.

The Stalin regime did not initially plan to send any of the Germans deported from European areas of the USSR to the Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Although the Soviet government apparently deported a small number of Germans living in Belorussia and Moscow to Uzbekistan in 1941 the vast majority of deported Germans ended up in Kazakhstan and Siberia. Instead the Soviet government originally planned to deport the local Germans from Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan to Kazakhstan. The Soviet government put their numbers at 11,741 from Kyrgyzstan, 3,346 from Turkmenistan and 2,022 from Tajikistan.[678] This planned deportation of most of the Germans from southern Central Asia to Kazakhstan did not happen.

Instead the German population already resident in Kazakhstan and Central Asia in 1941 remained in place. The Stalin regime had no need to deport them from the region. Indeed it needed their presence in Kazakhstan and Central Asia as a labor source. They already lived far from the front in areas that became destinations for Germans and other nationalities deported as special settlers.

Although not deported to Kazakhstan at this time the Germans living in southern Central Asia did come under a number of restrictions as did those ethnic Germans already resident in Kazakhstan and Siberia. First, the Stalin regime expelled all of the Germans in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from the larger cities of these two republics. The Soviet authorities forcibly removed the

677 Interview with Anna Abarazova (nee Fast) In Kant on 14 November 2010.
678 Bugai 1998, doc. 5, pp. 23–26.

Germans from the urban centers of these regions and relocated them on collective and state farms.

Among those Germans living in Turkmenistan that the Soviet government classified as special settlers were 64 families from Serakhs raion in Ashkabad Oblast. The Turkmen SSR MVD requested that they be deported in December 1948. The all union MVD fulfilled this request and mobilized all physically capable men and women from this community for industrial construction work in Cheliabinsk. The MVD deported the remaining 310 people deemed incapable of hard physical labor to Tomsk Oblast.[679] Thus over three years after Nazi Germany's defeat, the Stalin regime still engaged in punitive deportations of invalid Germans.

By 1 January 1953, the number of local German special settlers in Kazakhstan and Central Asia exceeded 80,000 people. This figure consisted of 62,631 in Kazakhstan, 14,845 in Kyrgyzstan, 4,664 in Uzbekistan, 137 in Tajikistan, and 6 in Turkmenistan.[680] The number of Germans living in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to avoid the special settlement restrictions remained extremely limited.

The Germans already settled in Kazakhstan and Central Asia before the outbreak of World War II found themselves placed under the special settlement conditions of deportees without being deported. The Soviet government had justified the deportation of the Volga Germans as a prophylactic measure. But, the imposition of special settlement restrictions upon local Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia can only be described as a form of collective repression based upon their ethnicity. It occurred only after the end of the war when Nazi Germany had already been defeated and posed no threat to the USSR. Located far from the front their freedom from special settlement restrictions during the war had not presented any security problems for the USSR. Indeed like the vast majority of the Germans the population had largely remained loyal to the Soviet state despite a history of repression and discrimination.

679 Bugai 1995, p. 46.
680 Zemskov 2005, pp. 213–218.

**Table 31: Changes in the Number of Special Settlers by Contingent, 1930–1948**[681]

| Name | Date | First Count | Later Inflow | Later Outflow | Count 1-07-48 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Former Kulaks | 1930–1935 | 962,256 | 22,209 | 840,808 | 143,657 |
| Germans | 1941–1945 | 949,829 | 134,994 | 80,425 | 1,004,398 |
| Chechens, Ingush, Karachais, and Balkars | 1943–1944 | 608,749 | 27,530 | 184,555 | 451,724 |
| Kalmyks | 1943* | 91,919 | 2,723 | 17,958 | 74,918 |
| Crimean Tatars, Crimean Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians | 1944 | 228,392 | 13,783 | 54,720 | 186,864 |
| Turks, Kurds and Khemshils | 1944 | 94,955 | 3,180 | 17,061 | 81,074 |
| Family members of OUN | 1944–1947 | 100,310 | 10,257 | 14,189 | 96,378 |
| Members of IPKH | 1945 | 1,502 | 79 | 486 | 1,095 |
| Family Members of Lithuanian Partisans | 1945–1948 | 49,331 | 68 | 1,244 | 48,150 |
| Vlaslovites | 1946–1948 | 148,079 | ---- | 13,149 | 134,930 |
| "Spongers" | 1948 | 25,104 | ---- | 27 | 25,077 |
| Total | ----- | 3,266,340 | 215,242 | 1,226,162 | 2,255,420 |

681 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 573, ll. 286–287.

**Table 32: Number of Germans by Locality not Subjected to Resettlement, Oct. 1949[682]**

| Locality | Local Spetz | Mobilized | Total Spetz | Not Spetz | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Azerbaidzhan | --- | --- | --- | 648 | 648 |
| Armenia | --- | --- | --- | 115 | 115 |
| Belorus | --- | --- | --- | 1,057 | 1,057 |
| Georgia | --- | --- | --- | 284 | 284 |
| Kazakhstan | 56,199 | 3,166 | 59,365 | 107 | 59,472 |
| Karelia | --- | --- | --- | 142 | 142 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 10,012 | 647 | 10,659 | 265 | 10,924 |
| Latvia | --- | --- | --- | 245 | 245 |
| Lithuania | --- | --- | --- | 829 | 829 |
| Moldavia | --- | --- | --- | 364 | 364 |
| Tadzhikistan | 74 | --- | 74 | 846 | 920 |
| Turkmenistan | 8 | 115 | 123 | 1,478 | 1,601 |
| Uzbekistan | 4,902 | 291 | 5,198 | 437 | 5,630 |
| Ukraine | --- | --- | --- | 10,737 | 10,737 |
| Estonia | --- | --- | --- | 90 | 90 |
| Bashkiria | 2,993 | 846 | 3,839 | 430 | 4,269 |
| Buriatia | --- | 177 | 177 | 55 | 232 |
| Daghestan | --- | --- | --- | 16 | 16 |
| Karbardia | --- | --- | --- | 25 | 25 |
| Komi | --- | 12 | 12 | 14 | 26 |
| Mari | 1 | --- | 1 | 67 | 68 |
| Mordovia | --- | --- | --- | 43 | 43 |
| North Ossetia | --- | --- | --- | 8 | 8 |
| Tatar ASSR | 55 | 173 | 228 | 201 | 429 |
| Udmurtia | 2 | 63 | 65 | 147 | 212 |
| Chuvashia | --- | --- | --- | 73 | 73 |
| Yakutia | 19 | --- | 19 | 77 | 77 |
| Altai Krai | 561 | 133 | 694 | 16,437 | 17,131 |
| Krasnodar | --- | --- | --- | 1,013 | 1,012 |
| Krasnoiarsk | 39 | --- | 39 | 1,762 | 1,741 |
| Primore | --- | --- | --- | 260 | 260 |
| Stavropol | --- | --- | --- | 224 | 224 |
| Khabarovsk | 348 | 1,381 | 1,729 | 166 | 1,895 |
| Amur | 1,457 | 954 | 2,411 | 36 | 2,447 |
| Arkhangelsk | --- | 19 | 19 | 272 | 291 |
| Astrakhan | --- | --- | --- | 95 | 95 |
| Briansk | --- | --- | --- | 25 | 25 |
| Velikoluksk | --- | --- | --- | 17 | 17 |

682 GARF, F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, ll. 250–255.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vladimir | --- | --- | --- | 260 | 260 |
| Vologoda | --- | 140 | 140 | 146 | 286 |
| Voronezh | --- | --- | --- | 176 | 176 |
| Gorky | --- | 153 | 153 | 194 | 347 |
| Grozny | --- | --- | --- | 106 | 106 |
| Dnepropetrovsk | 1 | 216 | 217 | --- | 217 |
| Ivanov | --- | --- | --- | 116 | 116 |
| Irkutsk | 7 | --- | 7 | 447 | 454 |
| Kalinin | --- | --- | --- | 149 | 149 |
| Kaluga | --- | --- | --- | 96 | 96 |
| Kemerovo | 1,556 | 1,737 | 3,293 | 344 | 3,637 |
| Kirov | 12 | 28 | 40 | 116 | 156 |
| Kostroma | 14 | --- | 14 | 157 | 171 |
| Crimea | --- | --- | --- | 509 | 509 |
| Kuibyshev | --- | 270 | 270 | 617 | 887 |
| Kurgan | 109 | --- | 109 | 658 | 767 |
| Kursk | --- | --- | --- | 57 | 57 |
| Leningrad | --- | --- | --- | 1,405 | 1,405 |
| Kaliningrad | --- | --- | --- | 28 | 28 |
| Molotov | 1,674 | 2,917 | 4,591 | --- | 4,591 |
| Moscow | 531 | 1,243 | 1,774 | 3,258 | 5,032 |
| Novgorod | -- | --- | --- | 417 | 417 |
| Novosibirsk | 5,906 | 284 | 6,190 | --- | 6,190 |
| Omsk | 1,326 | 312 | 1,638 | 45,244 | 46,882 |
| Orlov | --- | --- | --- | 70 | 70 |
| Penza | --- | --- | --- | 550 | 550 |
| Pskov | --- | --- | --- | 51 | 51 |
| Rostov | --- | --- | --- | 76 | 76 |
| Riazan | --- | 106 | 106 | 675 | 781 |
| Saratov | --- | --- | --- | 2,044 | 2,044 |
| Sverdlovsk | 1,613 | 1,270 | 2,883 | 851 | 3,734 |
| Smolensk | --- | --- | --- | 37 | 37 |
| Stalingrad | --- | --- | --- | 129 | 129 |
| Tambov | --- | --- | --- | 1,137 | 1,137 |
| Tomsk | 285 | 71 | 356 | --- | 356 |
| Tula | --- | 1,733 | 1,733 | --- | 1,733 |
| Tiumen | 83 | --- | 83 | 177 | 260 |
| Ul'ianovsk | --- | 35 | 35 | 116 | 151 |
| Cheliabinsk | 3,488 | 5,712 | 9,200 | 198 | 9,398 |
| Chita | 4 | --- | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Chkalovsk | 352 | 2,347 | 2,699 | 13,909 | 16,608 |
| Iaroslav | 41 | --- | 41 | 160 | 201 |
| South Sakhalin | 18 | --- | 18 | 84 | 102 |
| Dal'stroi | 1,326 | --- | 1,326 | --- | 1,326 |
| Total | 95,016 | 26,551 | 121,567 | 113,810 | 235,377 |

# 13 Number of Excess Deaths 1941–1948

The Germans in the USSR suffered a significantly higher rate of premature deaths during 1941 to 1948 in excess of their normal peacetime baseline. The exact numbers are of course unknown due to poor counting as has already been seen in the evidence presented earlier. But, there are a number of clues in the statistical record and it is possible to to make a rough approximation. One report noted that the number of German special settlers in the USSR on 1 November 1948 was 1,012,754. This number spread out over 5 union republics, 8 autonomous republics, and 27 oblasts was 410,780 less than the 1939 census.[683] Not all of these missing were dead. There were 113,810 Germans that were not special settlers living in the USSR at the time.[684] There were also around 102,000 ethnic Germans from the USSR that had managed to avoid forced repatriation from Germany.[685] So the actual decrease in the population due to net deaths over births rather than just accounting is about 200,000. The actual number of excess deaths as can be seen from the calculations below is actually higher.

The estimates of excess premature deaths of ethnic Germans with Soviet citizenship during World War II vary considerably. The lowest estimates come from Viktor Krieger who gives a total of 150,000 to 160,000 broken down between 60,000 to 70,000 deaths due to the labor army and 85,000 to 100,000 among special settlers not mobilized. The deaths among the special settlers is further subdivided between 1941 and 1945, 70,000 to 80,000 and 1947–1948 at 15,000 to 20,000.[686] This figure should be compared with his earlier estimate that the Russian Germans suffered 316,000 to 350,000 demographic losses (22–25%) that is a combination of excess deaths and reduced births from 1941–1945.[687] Ediev estimates

683 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 270.
684 GARF, F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 255
685 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* 150.
686 Krieger 2013, p. 240–242.
687 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* p. 150.

the excess deaths among Russian German special settlers at 228,000 (19.7%) between 1942 to 1952.[688] The previous estimates of actual excess losses thus range reasonably from 150,000 to 300,000.

The 1939 census counted 1,427,232 Germans in the USSR. This contrasts with 1,238,549 in the 1926 census and only 1,151,602 in the suppressed 1937 census. The 1937 census, however, did not include the German populations in Siberia, the Russian Far East, Azerbaijan, and Central Asia. The German population in Altai Krai and Omsk Oblast in the 1939 census was 93,035. So a significant portion of the difference is the result of just not counting whole regions.[689] But, there is also the fact that the 1939 census figures were inflated to cover losses from the 1932–1933 famine. The years 1939 to 1941 were relatively stable and prosperous and saw considerable compensatory births to replace the losses of the 1932 to 1933 famine, perhaps 150,000 and the 1937–1938 Great Terror, 55,000.[690] So Krieger estimates that the German population of the USSR in 1941 was between 1,440,000 to 1,460,000.[691] This is only slightly higher than the 1939 census.

Recorded deaths in special settlements for the Germans are grossly incomplete. Year by year records do not exist for 1941 to 1944. The figures for 1945 to 1947 show that deaths exceeded births. In 1948 births finally exceeded deaths for the German special setters in the USSR.[692] Looking at the available figures it is clear that the losses during the war exceeded 200,000. The German special settler population counted by the NKVD on 2 June 1942 was 807,293.[693] By 1 January 1945 this number had declined to 496,811. To this number must be added those Germans in the labor army which numbered 105,268 people at this time.[694] This gives a total of 602,079 German special settlers and labor army

688 D.M. Ediev, *Demograficheskie poteri deportirovannykh narodov SSSR*. Stavropol': Izd-vo stGAU 'Argus', 2003, table 104, p. 294.
689 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, table 1, p. 133.
690 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 136 and Krieger 2013, pp. 240–242.
691 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 140.
692 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* p. 140.
693 Zemskov 2005, p. 97.
694 Zemskov 2005, table 21, p. 119.

conscripts. Thus the counted German population declined by a total of 205,214 or over 25%. There are no large scale releases or escapes that could account for this loss. It is composed primarily of deaths in excess of births. This figure is actually an under count of the losses since a number of the 105,268 men and women in the labor army in 1945 were not among the 807,293 deported Germans. Rather they were conscripted from the German population already living in Kazakhstan, Siberia, and other eastern regions of the USSR. These numbers thus strongly suggest that the number of excess deaths among Germans in the USSR during World War II exceeded 200,000.

This rough approximation can be checked by looking at losses from 1941 to 1948. The number of German special settlers counted in November 1948 was 1,012,754 a decrease of 410,780 from the 1939 census.[695] As can be seen from the calculations below about 216,000 of the missing can be accounted for by either Germans in eastern regions of the USSR that were never special settlers or those that escaped forced repatriation from Germany. A rough approximation of the losses thus comes to about 195,000. For the year 1949 the number of German special settlers varies between 1,035,701 and 1,096,693 with 1 January 1950 reaching 1,099,758.[696] The 1948 figure for special settlers would have already absorbed the survivors of the labor army as well as Soviet citizens of German nationality forcibly repatriated back to the USSR. It does not include 113,810 Germans in the USSR as of 21 February 1949 that were never counted as special settlers.[697] This gives a total of 1,126,564 for early 1949. Subtracting this number from the 1939 census gives a decrease of 300,668 people. Subtracting from the 1941 population estimates given by Krieger gives a range from 313,436 to 333,346. To these losses must still be added Germans born between 1941 and 1949. The births recorded for the years 1945 through 1948 for German special settlers in the USSR is

695 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 270.
696 Berdinskikh, pp. 328–329 and Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 140.
697 GARF, F. 9479, O. 1, D. 372, l. 255.

25,773.[698] Given that total births for 1945 among German special settlers after four years of acclimation was still only 1,914 the number of births from 1941 to 1944 is likely to be minimal. Nevertheless, adding the births for German special settlers from 1945 through 1948 gives a total of 326,441 people to the total losses from 1939 to 1949. From these losses must be subtracted those Germans that managed to avoid repatriation back to the USSR. This number is estimated to be around 102,000.[699] This gives a loss of about 224,441 using the 1939 census and 237,209 to 257,209 for Krieger's 1941 estimates. These losses are considerably higher than Krieger's later 150,000 estimate. Since it includes all Germans born in the USSR rather than just special settlers the percentage is considerably lower than Ediev's estimate or about 15% to 18% rather than almost 20%. This is lower than most of the other deported peoples in the USSR due to the fact that 215,000 or so Germans born in the USSR avoided ever coming under special settlement restrictions. There is also the fact that as earlier deportees the Germans had less difficulty finding housing. Finally, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and V.N. Zemskov have both noted the Germans in the USSR like their ancestors that initially settled in the Russian Empire proved to be quite physically resistant to severe hardships and showed an uncanny ability to survive very difficult conditions.

698 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh,* p. 140.
699 Krieger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, p. 150.

# 14 End of the Special Settlement Regime for Germans

The material conditions among Germans in the USSR only improved substantially in 1948. The number of births among German special settlers did not exceed deaths until 1948.[700] By 1 January 1949 out of 1,035,701 German special settlers in the USSR over a third, 435,714, lived in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. They made up the single largest contingent of deportees in Kazakhstan. Germans formed nearly half of all special setters in Kazakhstan with 393,537 people. The Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik and Turkmen SSRs had considerably fewer Germans with a combined total of 42,177 German special settlers.[701] Kyrgyzstan had a recorded 14,954 German special settlers at this time. They made up the third largest contingent in the republic after Chechens and Karachais.[702] Unlike the Chechens and Karachais, almost all of whom had either been deported to Kyrgyzstan from the Caucasus themselves or had parents that were, the German special settlers consisted primarily of families well established in Central Asia before 1941.

**Table 33: German Special Settlers in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, 1949–1953[703]**

| Year | USSR | Kazakhstan | Uzbekistan | Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan | Turkmen |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1949 | 1,035,701 | 393,537 | 6,518 | 14,954 | 18,184 | 2,521 |
| 1950 | 1,106,277 | 414,265 | 7,788 | 16,504 | 20,028 | 2,544 |
| 1953 | 1,224,931 | 448,626 | 8,366 | 15,752 | 28,164 | 1,568 |

By 1 January 1953 just two months before Stalin died on 5 March 1953 the special settlement contingent in the USSR and especially Kazakhstan had grown to a truly gargantuan level. On this date the total number of registered special settlers had reached

700 Zemskov 2005, table 36, pp. 194–196.
701 Zemskov 2005, pp. 164–166.
702 Zemskov 2005, p. 164.
703 Zemskov 2005, pp. 164–166 and pp. 213–219 and Eisfeld and Herdt, doc. 333, pp. 340–342.

2,753,356 people of which 988,373 were in Kazakhstan. This was the largest number of any republic outside the RSFSR by a considerable margin. Uzbekistan came in a distant second with 188,689 and Kyrgyzstan third with 143,638 special settlers.[704] As can be seen from the table above Germans made up a sizable portion of the special settlers in Kazakhstan. But, they were rather small minorities of the total special settler count in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Their population remained largely concentrated in Siberia and Kazakhstan.

The NKVD did not report a thorough breakdown of the various contingents of German special settlers in Kyrgyzstan until 1953. The total number of German special settlers in Kyrgyzstan reached 15,752 people by 1 January 1953.[705] The vast majority of these second class Soviet citizens consisted of local Germans who had lived in Kyrgyzstan for generations and had been added to the special settlement rolls after World War II. Germans deported from elsewhere in the USSR, repatriated from abroad and even local Germans that returned to Kyrgyzstan after mobilization in the labor army constituted a small minority of the German special settlers in this republic. The division of Germans in Kyrgyzstan into subcategories of special settlers consisted of 14,845 local Germans, 528 deportees, 230 formerly mobilized into the labor army, 36 repatriates and 113 non-German relatives.[706] The German population in Kyrgyzstan thus unlike Kazakhstan and Tajikistan did not grow substantially as a result of deportations or forced repatriations.

In the year after Stalin's death the Soviet government began to dismantle the special settlement regime. This entire process would take until 1965.[707] But, would be completed for the Germans already on 13 December 1955 ahead of any other national group.[708] The first release from the special settlement restrictions

704 GARF F R-9479, O. 1, D. 642, l. 182.
705 Zemskov 2005, p. 214.
706 Zemskov 2005, p. 214.
707 Zemskov 2005, p. 279.
708 Auman and Chebotareva, p. 177.

took place on 5 July 1954. The Soviet government removed 872,909 children under the age of 16 from the special settlement rolls on this date as well as 2,886 adolescents over 16 so they could attend higher education.[709] Almost half of these minors, 409,332 were Germans.[710] This greatly reduced both the total number of special settlers and more drastically Germans on the special settlement rolls.

In the period between Stalin's death on 5 March 1953 and the end of the special settlement regime for the Germans in the USSR on 13 December 1955 the Soviet government received a large number of requests by individuals to be removed from the special settlement restrictions. A 23 July 1955 report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party dealt with some of these examples. One such request was from M.I. Litaver a German special settler working in the coal mines of Vorkuta.

> In 1941 I was mobilized in the rear in a labor battalion in Arkhangelsk Oblast. There I worked on the construction of the railroad between Astrakhan and Kizliar. From 1948 to present time I have worked for the Ministry of Coal Industry in the Komi ASSR. In 1954 for fine and long term work in the coal industry I was given the Order of Lenin by a decree from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. I am writing to the Council of Ministers of the USSR … remove me from special settlement.[711]

From Litaver's request it is clear that he was first mobilized into the labor army and then received the status of a special settler and was transferred from rail construction to work in the coal industry. Another request by a German to be removed from the special settlement restrictions detailed a rather unusual personal history. Diehl was a Volga German who had joined the Soviet military early in the war, been seriously wounded, then managed to avoid coming under the special settlement restrictions until 1948.

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709 Zemskov 2005, table 49, p. 259.

710 N.F. Bugai and A.N. Kotsonis, (eds.),"*Obiazat' NKVD SSSR … vyselt' grekov," (O deportasii grekov v 1930–1950 gody)*. Moscow: Insan. 1999, doc. 54, pp. 121–123.

711 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 896, l. 151.

> From the start of the Fatherland War in 1941 until 1 September 1941 I participated in the war for the socialist homeland … I received a serious wound and was moved to a hospital. At the present time I am an invalid from the Fatherland War, awarded medals. Until 1948 I lived freely, in 1948 the Commandant of Kolosovsk Raion section of the MVD of Omsk Oblast added me to the count, as a special settler, where I have since been counted.[712]

The large number of such letters led the Soviet regime to decide to release from special settlement restrictions all that had actively fought for the USSR and been invalided in the Fatherland War.[713] From the middle of 1954 to the end of 1955 the Soviet government took a number of decisions releasing certain categories of special settlers including large numbers of Germans until the final decree lifting all Germans from the status on 13 December 1955.

In addition to domestic Soviet processes of liberalization, establishing greater socialist legality, and dismantling much of the punitive apparatus of the Stalin era the release of Germans from the special settlement restrictions benefited from pressure by the West German government. Many months in planning, the September 1955 visit of Chancellor Adenauer to the USSR to establish diplomatic relations between Moscow and Bonn also sought to tie this relationship to improved treatment of the Russian Germans.[714] The government of the Federal Republic of Germany was well placed diplomatically and economically to use its leverage with Moscow to accelerate the parole of Germans in the USSR from the status of special settlers.

The Soviet authorities began piecemeal removal of certain categories of Germans from the special settlement rolls already in 1954. On 13 August 1954, they freed another 105,869 Germans from the special settlement restrictions.[715] These Germans had never been deported and had been added to the special settlement rolls either after being discharged from the labor army or the extension of the restrictions after World War II to local Germans

712 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 896, l. 151.
713 GARF F. 9479, O. 1, D. 896, l. 151.
714 Schmaltz, *Reform,* p. 95.
715 Zemskov 2005, table 49, p. 259.

living east of the Urals before 1941. On 9 May 1955 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany the Soviet government freed all members of the Communist Party and their families from the special settlement restrictions. This was a relatively small wave consisting of only 5,699 party members and 7,874 family members of all nationalities. But, Germans were disproportionately represented among those released at this time.[716] On 13 December 1955, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree titled, "On Lifting the Restrictions on the Rights of Germans and Members of their Families Found in Special Settlements." This decree freed all the remaining Germans in the USSR living under special settlement restrictions and MVD surveillance, both those internally deported in 1941 and those forcibly repatriated back to the USSR in 1945–1946. The decree, however, also explicitly banned those released from returning to their former places of residence or seeking compensation for lost property. Nor did it remove the false charges of treason.[717] That only came in 1964. The total number of Germans freed from special settlement restrictions by this decree was 695,216.[718] After 14 years the legal restrictions of the special settlement regime had finally been lifted.

716 Zemskov, 2005, table 49, p. 259.
717 Auman and Chebatoreva, p. 177.
718 Zemskov, 2005, table 49, p. 259.

# 15 The Post-Stalin Era

In 1955, the removal of the special settlement restrictions did not bring full national equality to the Germans in the USSR. The decree specifically prohibited the Germans from returning to the places from which the NKVD had deported them. It also barred them from seeking compensation for property lost as a result of the deportations. Finally, it did not annul the false accusations of mass treason made by the Stalin regime against the entire group.[719] The officially endorsed stigma of collective treason against the Soviet motherland remained against the Germans for another nine years.

The German population in Kazakhstan had more than quadrupled as a result of the war time deportations. On 18 October 1956, a resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan placed the German population of the republic at 480,397 people. The restrictions of the special settlement regime, however, had retarded their economic integration. They remained confined primarily to menial jobs, particularly in agriculture. Their representation among leadership and skilled positions continued to be extremely low. For instance only 57 Germans had been elected chairmen of kolkhozes in the entire republic. Likewise only 497 were managers of animal husbandry farms. While only 1,895 were members of tractor and irrigation brigades.[720] During the next couple of decades the Germans in Kazakhstan would advance considerably within the agricultural economy. However, they would continue to be denied access to higher education, government positions, and white collar jobs.

The piecemeal rehabilitation of Germans in the USSR was a slow and fitful process. After their release from the labor army and later special settlement restrictions at the end of 1955, it was not until 1964 that they received any redress. A draft of the 29

719 Alieva 1993, vol. l, p. 245.
720 Karpykova, doc. 125, p. 221.

August 1964 partial rehabilitation decree marked not for publication was completed on 10 July 1964. This initial draft had the title "On Lifting the Guilt in Relationship to the Large Group of German People, Living in the Region of the Volga." It noted that the Ukaz of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of 28 August 1941 had decreed them "guilty of actively helping and assisting the German-Fascist Occupation." The draft went on to note that this accusation had no basis and was a result of Stalin's cult of personality. The Germans had "contributed to the victory over Fascist Germany, and in the post-war years had actively participated in the construction of communism." The document then goes on to provide the justification for refusing to allow the Germans to return home. They had become "rooted in their new places of residence." The draft of the decree then lists the numerous Soviet government, party, and other positions held by Germans in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the RSFSR, and Ukraine since World War II. These included positions in the Supreme Soviet, local Soviets, and other lesser posts. The draft then has two operative clauses. The first one lifted the collective guilt from the Germans. The Second one condemned them to continued internal exile in their present locations without any ability to return to their ancestral homes in the Volga and other western regions of the USSR.[721] The next month an edited version of this decree would be published.

On 29 August 1964, the Soviet government published the final draft of the decree lifting the collective accusation of treason from the Germans. But this decree did nothing else. The prohibition on returning to their former homes still remained and the 1964 rehabilitation decree noted that the German population of the USSR had become "rooted" in their new places of settlement. It has very few differences from the earlier unpublished draft. One is that it added Uzbekistan as one of the named republics that had Germans elected to Soviets. Other than that it is just an edited version of the draft.[722] This decree received very little publicity

721 GARF F. 7523, O. 83, D. 1136, ll. 59–61.
722 Alieva 1993, vol. I, pp. 246–247.

and most Soviet citizens did not know of its existence. Prior to perestroika this decree only appeared in two official Soviet publications. In December 1964, it appeared in the Bulletin of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and in January 1965 it appeared in *Neues Leben* in German translation.[723] It did not appear during this time in the larger circulation Russian language newspapers. Hence, many Soviet citizens continued to erroneously believe that the Germans remained guilty of treason even after the 1964 decree.

The German population of Kazakhstan and Central Asia grew substantially in the post-war years. In particular the 1960s saw substantial migration to this region from Siberia. During the 1950s and especially 1960s a large number of Germans moved to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan from Siberia. By 1959 the German population of Kyrgyzstan had reached almost 40,000. This growth accelerated even more during the next decade. During the 1960s the German population of Kyrgyzstan grew by over 125%. While less impressive in terms of percentages the sheer growth in the numerical size of the German population in Kazakhstan during this time dwarfed Kyrgyzstan. Between 1959 and 1989 the German population of Kazakhstan increased from 658,698 to 957,518.[724] By the time the Soviet Union broke apart, there were more Germans in Kazakhstan than any other republic including the RSFSR.

During the years 1941 to 1955 the Germans remained deprived of a number of civil rights including the right to publications in their native language. After the abolition of the special settlement restrictions, the Soviet government partially restored this particular right. The creation of German language media outlets in Kazakhstan and Central Asia in the post-war years, however, took place slowly. Radio rather than print media led the way. German language radio broadcasts began out of Alma-Ata in 1957. During the 1970s German language programming on Radio Alma-Ata reached nearly five hours a week. Kyrgyzstan followed

723 German et al., p. 501, reproduction of *Neues Leben* translation on leaf 6.

724 Kerstin Armborst, *Ablosung von der Sowjetunion: Die Emigrationsbewegung der Juden und Deutschen vor 1987*. Munster: Lit Verlag, 2001. table 4, p. 47.

suit. In 1962 Radio Frunze also began to broadcast German language programs.[725] The provision of German language radio programs represented a small first step in the partial return to the Leninist cultural policies of *korenizatsiia* that occurred in the early 1960s.

Tselinograd, present day Nur Sultan, had one of the largest concentrations of Germans in the Soviet Union during the years following their release from the special settlement regime in 1955. In 1966 the Soviet government started to publish a daily newspaper in the German language for this community. During most of the Soviet era this paper, *Freundschaft* (Friendship), remained the only daily newspaper in the USSR printed in German. It also remained the only German language newspaper produced in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The other two German language newspapers in the USSR came out of Moscow, *Neues Leben* (New Life) and Slavgorod, *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag) in Siberia.[726] These three newspapers formed an important part of the German language publications in the USSR in the post-Stalin years.

Another important source of German language literature in the USSR came in the form of books. In 1965 the Soviet government authorized the publication of German language books in the USSR by "Progress" in Moscow and "Kazakhstan" in Alma-Ata. These two publishing houses published a total of 66 German language titles between 1967 and 1970. "Kazakhstan" printed 55 of these titles and "Progress" 11.[727] The number of copies of these German language books, however, remained limited.

In addition to German language media, the Germans had been deprived of German language education during the years of special settlement. In the post-Stalin years the Soviet government restored some token German language instruction for Germans. This education proved to be more symbolic than effective. The amount and quality of instruction proved completely inadequate

725 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 133.
726 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 132
727 German et al., p. 506.

to halt the almost complete loss of German language skills among younger generations of Germans.

Nonetheless, starting in 1957 both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan began to offer limited German native language education for a small number of German school children. On 2 February 1957, the Kazkakh SSR authorized the creation of native German language classes for German school children in grades two through four for two hours a week if ten or more parents of such students requested it.[728] This legislation led to a small number of Germans in Kazakhstan receiving instruction in German for two hours a week. During 1957–1958, 16,114 German students organized into 975 groups received these German lessons. The next academic year the number of groups had increased to 1,099 with 17,508 students.[729] In 1959 the German population of Kazakhstan numbered 658,698 people. In 1961 a total of only 8,500 German students attended these classes in Tselinograd Krai (later Astana Oblast) out of a population of 350,000 school aged children.[730] By 1973, Kazakhstan had 334 schools with 2,130 groups and 35,230 German students in grades two through ten receiving two hours of German language instruction a week.[731] The German population of Kazakhstan had increased to 877,500 by this time.[732] Most German students in Kazakhstan thus received no German language education.

The limited number of students to benefit from these classes was not their only problem. They also suffered from poor quality. A lack of trained teachers and textbooks made implementation of native German language instruction in Kazakhstan difficult. A letter from Genrikh Feller, a correspondent for *Neues Leben* appeared in the 20 October 1958 edition of *Kazakhstana Pravda* sharply criticizing the failure to fully implement the resolution of

728 Karpykova, doc. 136, pp. 224–225.
729 Karpykova, doc. 129.
730 German et al., p. 496.
731 Karpykova doc. 139, pp. 229–231.
732 Karpykova doc. 140, pp. 261–265.

2 February 1957.[733] Germans in native German language classes in Kazakhstan received generally inferior instruction in the German language.

The Kyrgyz program was equally as limited and unsuccessful as the Kazakh one. On 1 September 1957, the Kyrgyz authorities authorized German as a native language instruction for two hours a week in grades five and six. This program was expanded in 1960 to three hours a week in grades two through eight or one quarter of the number of hours of Russian language instruction Germans in Kyrgyzstan received.[734] By 1965 it was two hours a week in grades 2–4, five hours a week in grades 5,6, and 8 with 3 hours of grammar and literature a week in grade 7.[735] It never, however, exceeded more than five hours a week. As a result it was largely ineffective at preventing the loss of German language skills of the younger generations growing up in an almost completely Russian language environment.

After their release from special settlements in 1955 and especially after the 1964 partial rehabilitation there arose a movement among Germans to restore the Volga German ASSR and allow the deportees and their descendants in Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia to return home. One of the first activists to start pressuring the Soviet government to change its policy of keeping the Volga and other Germans in exile in eastern regions of the USSR was Dominick Hollmann. A teacher, writer, and member of the Communist Party in the Volga German ASSR and later Siberia, Hollmann engaged in a decades long letter writing campaign to try and convince the Soviet regime to reverse its permanent internal exile of its citizens of German ethnicity and restore their national territory on the Volga.

Hollmann wrote a number of letters to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1959 to 1989 demanding the restoration of the Volga German ASSR. At least 11 such letters have survived. Still living in exile in Krasnoiarsk he

733 Karpykova, doc. 128, pp. 228–229.
734 Krongardt, pp. 297–298.
735 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, p. 128.

wrote one such letter as early as 12 July 1959. This was only four years after the end of the special settlement restrictions and still five years before the partial rehabilitation of 1964. This first letter has ten points setting up an argument for the restoration of the Volga German Republic. The first four points emphasized the historical precedent of the Volga German Worker's Commune established by Lenin in 1918 and later upgraded in 1924 to an ASSR. The remaining six points argued that the national rights of the Germans in the USSR could only be protected by restoring their autonomous territory. In 1966 he wrote to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Kosygin. Like in his letter seven years ago to the Central Committee he again asked that the Volga German ASSR be restored as the only the only way to safeguard the rights of the Germans in the USSR. This was soon followed by a similar letter to the Secretary of the Central Committee, Suslov. In January 1968 he wrote to the Politburo. On 25 November 1969, he wrote to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. On 15 February 1971 he wrote to the XXIX Congress of the CPSU. He again wrote to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on 5 March 1979 and 25 July 1979.[736] In total these letters consistently stress an argument based upon socialist legality and Leninist nationality policies for the restoration of territorial autonomy for the Volga Germans.

Hollmann failed in his long lifetime to convince the Soviet government to reverse its policies of discrimination against Germans in the USSR and restore the Volga German ASSR. Unlike, many later activists particularly those in the 1970s and 1980s, however, he avoided arrest and trial by the Soviet regime. In part this was due to his careful wording of all his argumentation in the language of socialist legality and Leninist nationalities policy. As a long term member of the Communist Party Soviet Union and the Writers' Union he was very familiar with such rhetoric.

736 Letters from personal archives of Dominik Hollmann in the custody of his daughter Ida Bender in Hamburg Germany translated from Russian to English by Elena Bogdanovich. Copies of the originals and translations were provided to me by Professor Willam M. Wiest of Reed College on 3 February 2011.

The autonomy movement sought to restore the Volga German ASSR and thus restore those Germans that moved to this territory the rights they had enjoyed prior to deportation. The peculiar nature of the Soviet Union's political geography essentially made equality for diaspora nationalities such as the Germans impossible. They along with Greeks, Koreans, and other nationalities with their ancestral homelands outside the USSR could not avail themselves of the same rights as nationalities native to the USSR. This was because a whole host of rights, privileges, and life opportunities in the USSR were tied to living in one's own national territory. Among these advantages were native language education, media, and cultural institutions. Even more important was preference in admission to higher education and job selection, especially the prestigious and highly paid jobs in the local government and party apparatus. Nationalities without a territory lacked these advantages.[737] The Soviet Union had abolished the Volga German ASSR and thereby permanently reduced the Germans to second class citizenship in the USSR. However, the Soviet leadership resisted attempts to restore the territory thus treating the Germans who had lived in the Russian Empire and USSR since 1763 as alien elements. This discrimination could not be overcome through assimilation. Unlike the US, assimilation remained legally impossible in the USSR throughout its existence and continues to be so in most of its successor states. Every person had his ethnicity, *natsional'nost'*, listed on line five of his identification documents. This category remained a biological category which the individual inherited from his parents. Only in the case of mixed marriages could the individual choose from among one of the two parent's nationalities at age 16.[738] This meant that people already classified as German by the Soviet government could never escape second class citizenship. Their children could only escape if the other parent had a nationality other than German.

737 Viktor Zaslavsky and Robert J. Brym *Soviet-Jewish Emigration and Soviet Nationality Policy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983, pp. 102–105.

738 Karklins, pp. 31–32.

The autonomy movement was short lived. It only managed to survive from 1964 to 1967 before dissolving due mainly to a lack of any possibility of achieving their goal of restoring the Volga German ASSR. They managed to achieve two meetings with Mikoyan in 1965.[739] But, the Soviet authorities refused to make any concessions to the delegations regarding the restoration of territorial autonomy for the ethnic German minority in the USSR.

The official removal of apartheid like residency restrictions on Germans in the USSR only occurred over eight years after the official annulment of the charges of treason. The wholesale ban on the Germans returning to their previous areas of settlement retained the force of Soviet law until 3 November 1972.[740] Only at this time did Germans receive formal legal equality with other Soviet citizens regarding their ability to choose their place of residency in the USSR. Until this time they remained with few exceptions legally confined to the Asian areas of the Soviet Union. In fact, this geographic segregation still largely continued after 1973 due to individual denials of residency permits, but the official blanket ban on Germans as a nationality from living in western regions of the USSR had been lifted.

The lack of political integration of the Germans into Kazakhstan and Central Asia during the Soviet era showed clearly in their low membership in the Communist Party. By October 1973, Germans made up 6.6% of the population. Only 2.7% of this population, however, belonged to the Communist Party. Only three Germans served in the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR.[741] The Soviet government still refused to incorporate Germans into its power structure above the purely local level in any significant numbers.

In the early 1970s a new political movement arose among the Germans in the USSR. Convinced that the Soviet government would never restore full legal equality to its German population,

739 V. Fuchs, *Rokovye dorogi: Povolzhkikh nemtsev: 1763–1993*. Krasnoiarsk Krai: "Vozrozhdenie," 1993, pp. 157–179.
740 Alieva 1993, vol. I, pp. 247–248.
741 Karpykova doc. 140, pp. 261–265.

this movement sought to achieve the right to emigrate from the USSR and settle in Germany. Residents of Kyrgyzstan played an important role in this new movement. Often migration activists would move from Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan to occupied Estonia or Latvia before settling in West Germany. The Baltic nations had long been influenced by the culture of the Baltic Germans. Thus Germans felt more culturally at home among Estonians and Latvians than among Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. The Germans also believed with some foundation that the local Baltic OVIR (Offices of Visa and Registration) which granted individuals permission to emigrate were considerably more likely to respond favorably to their requests than those in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.[742] Consisting mainly of men and a few women with only middle school educations, no membership in the Communist Party, and jobs in factories or agriculture these activists had concluded that the Soviet government would never reestablish national autonomy for the Germans. They believed their only option to avoid discrimination for being German and to recover their disappearing language and culture was to emigrate from the USSR to West Germany.[743] During Soviet times a very high percentage of Germans in Estonia and Latvia received such permission compared to the Soviet Union proper.

Discrimination against Germans in admissions to higher education remained pronounced throughout the Soviet era. As late as the 1960s Germans in Kyrgyzstan made up only 0.8% of university students despite being 3.1% of the total population. Post-graduate degrees such as Kandidat and Doktor Nauk degrees were non-existent among the German population. Up until 1970 there was not a single German in Kyrgyzstan with a

742 Benjamin Pinkus and Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion: Geschichte einer nationalen Minderheit im 20 Jahrhundert,* Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987, pp. 507–514.

743 Estonian Supreme Court Case K-I-43, 12 February 1974 to 8 July 1974, (2335–2338), vol. I, "Inquiry: On the group of people of German nationality violating social order in the city of Moscow on 11 February 1974," pp. 67–71 and vol. IV, "*Prigovor* (Sentence)", pp. 219–224.

post-graduate degree.[744] By 1979 the percentage of Germans in Kyrgyzstan with higher education had increased to 3% versus 11.4% for Russians and 9% for native Kyrgyz. This was lower than even other marginalized minorities in the republic such as Uzbeks at 4.8% and Uyghurs at 4%.[745] Lack of higher education also remained pronounced among the Germans in Kazakhstan. In 1979 only 2.4% of Germans in Kazakhstan over the age of ten had received higher education in contrast to 5.6% of Kazakhs and 6.9% of Russians in the republic.[746] They thus remained significantly under-educated in comparison to other nationalities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In addition to being refused admittance to universities, other more violent forms of persecution also appeared. In the late 1970s, *Aussiedler* arriving in Germany reported frequent racist attacks against them by local Kyrgyz armed with knives.[747] Hostile attitudes towards Germans also persisted in Kazakhstan. In response to a plan to create a German autonomous oblast in northern Kazakhstan, Kazakh youth staged angry anti-German demonstrations in Tselinograd (Nur Sultan) and Atsabar in June 1979.[748] These attitudes added to the already numerous push factors pressuring Germans to emigrate from the USSR and settle in West Germany.

These anti-German riots resulted from one of the stranger events in the history of Soviet nationality policies. In 1979 the Soviet government made preparations to establish a German Autonomous Oblast in Kazakhstan. The Brezhnev regime sought to deflect both external criticism of its policies towards Germans and deflate the emigration movement by providing an alternative homeland in the USSR. To achieve these goals the Politburo authorized the formation of a token German autonomous oblast in

744 Fleischhauer and Pinkus, *Soviet Germans,* p. 121.
745 Alieva, vol. I, p. 203.
746 Kreiger, *Rein, Volga, Irtysh*, table, 3, p. 124.
747 Karklins, p. 54.
748 Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004, p. 203.

northern Kazakhstan on 31 May 1979.[749] This resolution was never carried out. Kunaev, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan from 1964–1986 approved the organization of mass demonstrations by Kazakh university students against the plan starting on 16 June 1979. These demonstrators carried openly racist signs protesting the granting of any national rights to Kazakhstan's German minority.[750] The plans to create a German autonomous oblast ultimately failed due to the anti-German demonstrations engineered by Kunaev.

**Table 34: The Distribution of Germans in Kazakhstan and Central Asia 1959–1989[751]**

| Year | USSR | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan | Tajikistan | Turkmenistan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1959 | 1,619,655 | 658,698 | 39,915 | 17,958 | 32,588 | 3,647 |
| 1970 | 1,846,317 | 858,077 | 89,834 | 33,991 | 37,712 | 4,298 |
| 1979 | 1,936,000 | 900,207 | 101,057 | 39,517 | 38,853 | 4,561 |
| 1989 | 2,038,603 | 957,518 | 101,309 | 39,809 | 32,671 | 4,434 |

The emigration movement for Germans in Russia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia originated in the 1970s. But, it only took on a truly mass character after the collapse of the USSR. The scale of emigration greatly increased after 1 January 1987. On this date the Soviet government lifted its arbitrary restrictions preventing Soviet citizens from emigrating. Now any Soviet citizen could leave provided there was a foreign state willing to accept them. During the last years of the USSR about a fifth of the German population left Kazakhstan and Central Asia for Germany.[752] After Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan received independence this trend greatly accelerated. Between 1992 and 1996 nearly a million Germans left the former Soviet Union for Germany. Most of these *Aussiedler* came from Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Kazakhstan constituted over half of all new arrivals in Germany during these years with 558,460 people. Another 52,163 new *Aussiedler* came from Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan, Tajiki-

749 Mukhina, pp. 155–156.
750 Mukhina, pp. 155–159.
751 Armborst, table 4, p. 47.
752 Polian, p. 208.

stan and Turkmenistan accounted for 33,650 people.[753] By 1997 two thirds of the Germans that had lived in Kazakhstan in 1989, five sixths of those in Kyrgyzstan and almost all of those in Tajikistan had emigrated.[754] The civil war in Tajikistan following the disintegration of the USSR led to the almost total emigration of Germans. In the other Central Asian states increased discrimination against non-titular nationalities led Germans to take advantage of their legal ability to settle in Germany. Ultimately, almost all Germans from southern Central Asia left for Germany. Only Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation retain a substantial German population. According to the German government there were some 230,000 Germans still remaining in Kazakhstan in 2006.[755] The 2009 Kazakh census put it considerably lower at a little over 178,000. Over three quarters of the German population of Kazakhstan and Central Asia had thus emigrated since 1987.

**Table 35: Emigration to Germany from the former USSR, 1992–1998[756]**

| Year | Total | Russian Fed. | Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Ukraine |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1992 | 195,576 | 55,875 | 114,382 | 12,168 | 2,700 |
| 1993 | 207,347 | 67,365 | 113,288 | 12,373 | 2,711 |
| 1994 | 213,214 | 68,397 | 121,517 | 10,847 | 3,139 |
| 1995 | 209,409 | 71,685 | 117,148 | 8,858 | 3,650 |
| 1996 | 172,181 | 63,311 | 92,125 | 7,467 | 3,460 |
| 1997 | 131,895 | 47,055 | 73,967 | 4,010 | 3,153 |
| 1998 | 101,550 | 41,054 | 51,132 | 3,253 | 2,983 |

The once large and at times prosperous German communities in Kazakhstan and Central Asia have largely disappeared. This is especially true in southern Central Asia. There are almost no Germans left in Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan where they once numbered over 100,000 there are only about 8,000 remaining.[757] The

753 Polian, table 13, p. 210.
754 Polian, pp. 208–209.
755 Krieger et al., p. 33.
756 German and Pleve, p. 65.
757 Armaan Srivastava, "Rot-Front – The Last German Village of Kyrgyzstan," *Eurasia TImes* 15 July 2020, https://eurasiantimes.com/rot-front-the-last-german-village-of-kyrgyzstan/accessed on 17 March 2021.

ethnic diversity that formerly marked this region has greatly diminished. European diaspora groups such as the Germans, Jews, Greeks, and Poles have largely ceased to exist due to mass emigration. Only some areas of Kazakhstan such as Akmola Oblast still have large German populations.

The mass emigration of ethnic Germans from the Russian Federation to Germany during the 1990s and beyond has been less extreme than that from Kazakhstan and Central Asia. From 1989 to 2010 the German population in Russia declined from 850,000 to less than 400,000 according to the official census data. Despite losing over half of its German population to emigration the Russian Federation surpassed Kazakhstan by a factor of two in having the most Germans of any former Soviet state. This has shifted the center of German life in the former Soviet states from Kazakhstan and Central Asia to Russia, particularly Siberia. But, the biggest shift has been from the former Soviet Union as a whole to Germany.

# 16 Conclusion

The Years of Great Silence for the Germans in the USSR between 1941 and 1955 have received little attention in the US and other English speaking countries. Against the back drop of the Second World War, the fate of a million and a half people ethnically and culturally related to the primary nemesis of the US, UK, and USSR during the 1940s has been treated as an inconvenient detail. While the subject has received much more scholarly and popular attention in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and Germany since the breakup of the USSR, it has remained not only largely ignored, but semi-taboo in the US. It is not just that the sources are largely in Russian and to a lesser extent German. But, rather the US and UK are still immersed in their own Years of Great Silence regarding much of World War II. In particular, addressing any Allied including Soviet crimes during the war and immediately afterwards against ethnic Germans remains strongly discouraged and overshadowed by a mythic construction of the war in which all Germans are demonically evil and their political and military enemies morally infallible. Given this predominant popular myth even research into the fate of the much larger and in many ways easier to research groups of Germans expelled from eastern Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia has remained extremely limited in the English speaking world. The fate of the smaller groups of Germans that remained trapped behind the Iron Curtain thus has received very scant attention in the English language literature. It is my hope that this short book will partially ameliorate this general lack of attention.

The Germans in the Soviet Union were the largest of a number of national groups subjected to ethnic cleansing by the Stalin regime during World War II. They constituted nearly half of all the people deported as special settlers by the NKVD from western regions of the USSR to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia during the war. The 1941 erasure of 177 years of German settlement from the Volga region also preceded the ethnic cleansing of the Karachais, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars,

and Meskhetian Turks by over two years. It thus sticks out as the largest of a series of ethnically motivated crimes by the Soviet government during the war.

The losses and trauma suffered by the Germans in the USSR from 1941 to 1955 greatly altered their historical path of development. It geographically scattered them across Siberia and Kazakhstan and greatly accelerated their acculturation into a much larger Soviet Russian culture. Hopes of creating a distinct Soviet German speaking nation in the Volga German ASSR were permanently destroyed by the forced dispersal of its population from this area of compact settlement. The deportations also psychologically marked them as being part of a single outsider group defined by biological descent from German colonists and laid the foundations for the massive emigration out of the former Soviet states in the 1990s. The fourteen Years of Great Silence formed the nadir of the historical narrative of the Russian Germans as an ethno-national group.

The deportations, special settlement restrictions, and mobilization into the labor army, however, only form a part of the historical narrative of the Russian Germans and it would be wrong to view their entire history from 1763 to today solely through this lens. Instead the narrative arc as a whole should be viewed as having several stages. These are an initial heroic narrative of the original settlement and economic success, followed by the victim narrative of the years of Soviet repression, and ending with a redemption narrative on overcoming the Years of Great Silence. This book has focused on the middle victim part to the neglect of the first and third parts. There has been a considerable amount of research published on the first part of this narrative not only in Russian and German, but even in English. The third and perhaps most important part of the narrative still largely remains to be written in any language.

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